

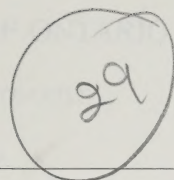
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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 28 April 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 28 avril 1993

## Standing committee on estimates

Organization

## Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Organisation



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum





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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 28 April 1993

The committee met at 1529 in committee room 2.

## ELECTION OF CHAIR

**Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum):** Honourable members, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a Chair. Could I have nominations? Mr Carr.

**Mr Gary Carr (Oakville South):** Yes. I'd like to nominate Cam Jackson, the member for Burlington South, as the Chair.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Are there any further nominations? Okay, seeing no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and Mr Cam Jackson be elected as Chair.

**Mr Carr:** In a landslide.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** They've muzzled you now, Cam. They put you in the chair.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Never stopped him before.

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** Although we have an agenda, as my first duty it's a pleasure to welcome our new clerk, Tonia Grannum. I understand, although she's not immediately new, this is her first full sessional assignment. We're delighted and honoured that she's been assigned to work with us, and I'd officially like to welcome you on behalf of the committee. She's very, very approachable and supportive and her office is always open, so please take advantage of that kindness and that support.

## ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

**The Chair:** The second item on the agenda will be the election of a Vice-Chairman. I'm open to any nominations. The Chair recognizes Mr Carr again.

**Mr Carr:** Yes. I would like to nominate Ted Arnott as the Vice-Chair.

**The Chair:** Are you sure Mr Arnott is willing to serve in this capacity?

**Mr Carr:** He sure is.

**The Chair:** Are there any further nominations for the position of Vice-Chair?

**Mr Bisson:** Let's have an election. I would like to nominate Mr Carr.

**The Chair:** Mr Carr, are you willing to stand for the position?

**Mr Carr:** I would love to. Unfortunately, I sit on another committee, so I'll have to thankfully decline. It was nice of you to offer.

**The Chair:** A final call for nominations for Vice-Chair. Seeing none, the Chair declares Mr Ted Arnott as our Vice-Chair.

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** Where is Ted? I'd like to congratulate him.

**The Chair:** Ted is doing his 125 ceremonies in his riding today and expresses his regrets at being unable to be with us.

## APPOINTMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEE

**The Chair:** The third item of business is the Chair would appreciate receiving nominations of persons for the subcommittee so that we can proceed with ordering up our business fairly soon.

**Mr Carr:** I would like to move that a subcommittee on committee business be appointed to meet from time to time at the call of the Chair or at the request of any member thereof to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee; that substitution be permitted on the subcommittee; that the presence of all members of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting; and that the subcommittee be composed of the following members: Mr Jackson as the Chair, Mr Arnott as the Vice-Chair, Mr Bisson and Mr Ramsay.

**The Chair:** That's an interesting way of doing it, and the Chair will receive it since it is in order. Is there any discussion on the motion?

**Mr Carr:** I'm just doing what I'm told.

**The Chair:** Maybe he should have been Vice-Chair. That was the easy way of doing it.

**Mr Carr:** It'd be less work if I was.

**Mr Wiseman:** Is this a slate? Should we be offering up another slate here?

**The Chair:** The Chair is open to any amendments to the aforementioned motion. Mr Bisson.

**Mr Bisson:** Just a question of procedure, in regard to the subcommittee having the authority to meet, is it always necessary that all parties be there? That's in the standing orders?

**The Chair:** The clerk suggests that it is possible to amend the motion as it relates to the point you've just raised, Mr Bisson, but when I look at it, "that the presence of all members of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting," that is how the motion is before us. If you should choose to change that—our standing order 123(b) suggests that you can order up the number constituting a quorum if you so wish. We'll give Mr Bisson a moment.

**Mr Bisson:** I guess the question I was asking the clerk is, is it always the practice that all members of the subcommittee have to be there in order for the subcommittee to do its business? I know on a committee I was on previously we had gone ahead at one time without a

particular party being there.

**The Chair:** The standing orders suggest that the committee responds to that point. The motion before us clearly sets out what a quorum constitutes. It means full attendance of the four aforementioned individuals in the motion. It's a standard motion but it is amendable, so your experience that you are referencing was probably ordered up in an amended fashion.

**Mr Bisson:** Okay. I support the motion.

**The Chair:** Are there any further questions or comments with respect to the motion? If not, I'd like to call the question. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

#### COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**The Chair:** Earlier I had requested that the clerk prepare a summary of the estimates that had been considered by this committee in the last three estimates years. That is being circulated now as an assist to committee members as you return to your caucuses to consider your selections, which will be the order of the day at one of our earliest meetings following the Treasurer's budget tabling.

I'd also like to introduce the committee to Mr Robert Nishman, who has been assigned as our research officer. We're quite comfortable, Robert, for you to join us here at the table.

I'm further guided by the clerk that the package I was referring to was sent to your offices earlier but what is now before you is just the immediate preceding estimates year. Are there any questions about the document

or any questions for Robert or any other new business for the committee?

Then I would suggest, simply by way of information, that the most significant announcement we as a committee anticipate at the moment is the Treasurer advising us of a date on which he will bring forward the budget. The standing orders will guide us in terms of the requirement of our standing orders that after five sessional days the estimates have to be tabled. This does not impede us in making the selection process, but I think it's convention and preferred that we see the estimates before making that determination.

However, caucuses know the order in which we make the selections and you can be putting your minds around that between now and whenever. The subcommittee will meet soon, but we as a committee will probably not meet until we're ready to do our selection. Sort of as information, are you comfortable with that? Because that's what the Chair will accept as your guidance. Very good. If there's no other business, then the Chair will entertain a motion to adjourn.

**Mr Bisson:** I would like to make a motion that we adjourn until after the budget.

**The Chair:** Mr Bisson has moved that we adjourn today's committee hearing. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

The committee adjourned at 1539.











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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**\*Chair / Président:** Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South/-Sud PC)

**Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

**\*Abel, Donald** (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

**\*Bisson, Gilles** (Cochrane South/-Sud ND)

**\*Carr, Gary** (Oakville South/-Sud PC)

Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

**\*Haeck, Christel** (St Catharines-Brock ND)

**\*Jamison, Norm** (Norfolk ND)

**\*Lessard, Wayne** (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

**\*Ramsay, David** (Timiskaming L)

**\*Wiseman, Jim** (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

**\*In attendance / présents**

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** Nishman, Robert, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 2 June 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Organization

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 2 juin 1993

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Organisation

Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum



### **Coat of arms**

A new coat of arms appears on the cover of Hansard. Presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario by the Governor General on 26 April 1993, it emphasizes the distinctive character of the Assembly and distinguishes the Assembly's identity from that of the government. It was created at this time to mark the bicentennial of the First Parliament of Upper Canada and the centennial of the present Legislative Building. Further information may be obtained by calling 416-325-7500.

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### **Les Armoiries**

Les nouvelles armoiries paraissent sur la couverture du Journal des débats. Présentées à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario par le gouverneur général le 26 avril 1993, elles soulignent le caractère distinct de l'Assemblée et mettent en valeur l'identité de l'Assemblée par rapport au gouvernement. Les armoiries ont été créées en ce moment pour marquer le bicentenaire du premier parlement du Haut-Canada et le centenaire du présent Édifice de l'Assemblée législative. De plus amples renseignements sont disponibles en composant le 416-325-7500.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 2 June 1993

The committee met at 1540 in committee room 2.

## COMMITTEE BUDGET

**The Chair (Mr Cam Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. The agenda has been circulated or is in front of members. At the outset, I should indicate that yesterday's subcommittee meeting was cancelled, and therefore some of the activities which we were going to put our minds around yesterday are on today's agenda.

If I might, although the Chair sees a quorum, I would perhaps like to start with item 2 if that is okay with members. The clerk will circulate copies of the budget.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** I have no problem going with item 2.

**The Chair:** You can see the budget is being recommended in the amount of \$20,864. Perhaps the extraordinary highlight would be in the area of allowances. I believe our clerk has built into the budget an accommodation of perhaps two weeks of potential summer sittings. As you know, with the lateness of the budgets over the last few years, it has compressed the amount of time which the standing orders speak to that we are able to deal with estimates. For that reason, there has been periodic approval by the House leaders to allow us to sit during the recess when, as you know, the standing orders suggest that we should be sitting when the House is sitting.

That is probably the reason why the budget might appear a little higher than a few others. Our actuals last year were high because we did have to have meetings when the House was not sitting.

**Mr Wiseman:** Are we doing 3 or 2?

**The Chair:** This budget is for two weeks.

**Mr Wiseman:** No, no. You said you wanted to go to item 2, or did you want to go to item 3 on the agenda? Item 2 is, will the committee need extra sitting time during the summer recess?

**Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum):** You've got something from the subcommittee.

**Mr Wiseman:** Okay. Let me see this now. Let me see the updated one. Now I'm on track. Wrong agenda.

**The Chair:** No problem. Are there any questions with respect to the budget?

**Mr Wiseman:** Yes, I have one. In the interest of remaining consistent with the other committee that I'm on, I would like to take a look at the catering and hospitality budget and suggest that the amount of coffee that is supplied to the committee be cut in half, given that it's my understanding that not all the coffee is—

**The Chair:** —consumed.

**Mr Wiseman:** —consumed, and that we eliminate the chocolate milk, the pop, juice and the bottled water and just have coffee and tea.

**The Chair:** You're not eliminating regular water and breadcrumbs from this, are you?

**Mr Wiseman:** I would eliminate the breadcrumbs.

**The Chair:** Is there any support for this Dickens-esque approach to our budget?

**Mr Wiseman:** You want more?

**Interjection:** Ice cubes.

**The Chair:** Do you want to put that in the form of a motion?

**Mr Wiseman:** Yes, I would move that.

**The Chair:** I would need a replacement figure.

**Mr Wiseman:** I don't know what the replacement figure would be.

**The Chair:** Well, water's free in this building, so we could potentially go to zero. Oh, you want half the coffee?

**Mr Wiseman:** Half the coffee.

**The Chair:** So give me a figure.

**Mr Wiseman:** If I knew what the cost was of what's on the table now, I'd be able to give you a number, roughly speaking, but I would say—

**The Chair:** Actually, in fairness, since this is a budget, you'd have to adjust your final figure. But really the best way to deal with your suggestion is to make it a policy of this committee and the policy then would be, from here on in, these are what—because if you gave the committee \$1,000 to spend as the figure, we still might have enough money just to spend \$1,000 and we could lie in the lap of luxury with Pepsi and fruit juice.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No, I'm trying to make a point here. It's really a policy issue if you want to reduce the amount of hospitality. If you adjust it in the budget, budgets adjust internally, so that really doesn't achieve it unless it becomes the policy that that's what's available. That's really all I'm saying. That's how budgets work.

**Mr Wiseman:** Well, I would like to see it become the policy. It has been adopted as the policy of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs that this be the case, and I would think then, to be consistent, we should adopt it here. We could leave the catering and hospitality number the way it is, but the policy would be that those items wouldn't be here and

therefore whatever surplus would be left over would be turned back.

**The Chair:** Can I ask a real dumb question? Do they fill the tureen half full or do they get a smaller tureen?

**Clerk of the Committee:** They get a smaller one.

**The Chair:** They get a smaller one? Is that it?

**Clerk of the Committee:** There are smaller ones available.

**The Chair:** There are smaller ones available. Okay. Good enough. That is roughly worded as a policy. Any discussion on the policy of half coffee, no juice or pop? No, it's half coffee, tea only. Any discussion? Mr Abel.

**Mr Donald Abel (Wentworth North):** I think we should have something other than just tea or coffee because there are some people who just prefer to drink something else. Juice, I think, should be available to those who do not care to drink coffee.

**The Chair:** John, please don't leave. Oh, you're going to grab the last juice before it goes, is that it? I don't blame you.

**Mr Abel:** I should have kept quiet. Now there's no juice left for me.

**The Chair:** I really think that with the numbers of years of experience around the table, a lengthy discussion here is not necessarily warranted. All those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Opposed? The motion is defeated.

Any further discussion on the budget or any policies that may flow from it?

**Mr Wiseman:** In that case, I would move that the budget in the amount of \$20,864 be approved and that the Chair be authorized to present the budget to the Board of Internal Economy.

**The Chair:** I don't need a seconder for that, do I? I didn't think so. Any last discussion? If not, all those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Just a quick question, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes?

**Ms Haeck:** What is the likelihood that we will exhaust that figure? Have we tended to use up every cent that has been allocated to us as a committee or have we been harbouring our money?

**The Chair:** The general experience in this committee has been that it has been under budget consistently. We don't engage in inviting outside deputants who some approach periodically for their expenses, which is generally an unforeseen item that emerges midterm. It is unique that our committee doesn't have that, unless we were to engage in a review of estimates processes in other provinces and chose to invite somebody. But that's not built into this budget, so ours is fairly insulated in that respect, Ms Haeck. That's the short history

of it and the reason.

**Ms Haeck:** I understand what Mr Wiseman was attempting to do, which is why I voted with Mr Abel that there is a range of needs that are definitely represented by what's on the hospitality table, but I do feel that it's good to be reassured that we have not gone overboard in our spending.

**The Chair:** I am sure that the office of the Legislative Assembly will benefit from our surplus, or non-spending the portion of our budget which isn't spent this year. If that's agreeable then, I would proceed to item 1.

1550

#### COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**The Chair:** The Chair would like to make a comment at the outset with respect to the fact that we are here today to begin our mandate in accordance with the standing orders. The standing orders indicate that the estimates books would be provided five sessional days from the budget.

My understanding is the estimates books are not ready. My experience as Chair in the two previous years is the estimates books have not been ready and it has been our habit to identify those ministries so that we could impel those ministries to produce them quickly, in accordance with our standing orders. Last year they indicated they'd need up to 30 days. Well, our standing orders are very clear, so we responded by making our selections, notifying the ministries and they had to have them produced.

However, if anyone wishes to raise the question—and I think it's only fair that it be discussed briefly—if we wait for the estimates books, which may or may not arrive in the next one or two weeks, we may not get into our selection process and notification of ministries and get on with our job, which may severely inhibit our ability to take a reasonable approach at completing our task.

I don't want to go into the long history of the trouble but, essentially, the later the budget, the later estimates, but estimates don't complete when they're completed, estimates have to be reported the third Thursday of November. As you know, we have a rather lengthy period we prorogue for the summer.

However, if members are not prepared to proceed today, the Chair would respect that request. It's just that this is a strategy that's been utilized in order to maintain some forward mobility on our task. Otherwise, we sit and wait for the ministries to finally come around. John, did you—Mr Cleary. Sorry, I apologize.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** You raised the matter, and I think that's sufficient there to move on with it. I don't like doing it the way it's not supposed to be done, but the House came back so late this time and the budget was late and I think that we should get

on with it.

**The Chair:** I appreciate that. Any other comments? Okay. If that's the case, I hope members are prepared to proceed with ordering up their nominees, and I believe we start with the selection of ministries. In the first round, the first two selections are from the official opposition, the second two choices are from the third party and the last two selections of the first round are for the government party.

As you know, it's up to 15 hours, so it is helpful to the committee in the first round if you indicate if you have a preference for time. Otherwise, at the end of the selection we'll now have to allot time to it. If you know the amount of time you'd like to devote to a selection, it is helpful to do that so it can clarify people's thinking, and the process works smoother when we do it that way.

If that's agreeable, let's try that, but the committee also has to inform the ministries of how much time. So we have to report the selection and the amount of time we wish to devote, and the standing orders say up to 15 hours.

**Mr Wiseman:** I just want a clarification on that. My understanding is if one ministry is chosen in the round, the max is 15 hours. The standing orders also say that we have to pick six. So would that be evenly divided among the six ministries, or how do—this is new to me.

**The Chair:** It's divided in accordance with my previous announcement as to the number. The amount of time—it has been our custom in the last three years for the Liberals to determine in the first round how to apply 15 hours to their two selections. So they could do 14 hours and one hour, they could do seven and a half and seven and a half, they could do 10 and 5, they could do any of those combinations. That's how I think we've been doing it. I don't interpret them, and I would love if anybody has anything to contribute to that, but I don't read in the standing orders that each ministry is up to 15 hours. I thought the rotation was 15 hours.

**Mr Wiseman:** That was my understanding. Say the Liberals, just hypothetically, decided to pick two ministries and said they wanted them for seven and a half each. That means the first round is over, because there's no time left in order to determine either the next party or the government party. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. You'll have to—

**Mr Wiseman:** If the Liberals decided they're going to pick two and that they want seven and a half hours each, that's it, the round's over. There isn't any more time left.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr Wiseman:** Maybe we can have a little discussion about how much time. I mean, if we can all come to an agreement, then it might be a little bit more fair if there is consensus how to divide up the time so

that everybody would at least get a pick in the first round.

**The Chair:** No. We're obligated to report six ministries in the first round. Okay? Your caucus will be guaranteed to pick two. Your caucus is being given by this committee the right to choose the amount of hours you'd like to apply to those two ministries. The other two caucuses will provide input and suggest to you that, as an example, Health is deserving of more than two hours. Okay? But if you say, "It's our choice and we only want two hours," that's your decision.

Now, if you want to sit and negotiate hours, I'm prepared to do that. The Chair's in your hands. I'm just simply saying that the simple way to do it is, when I call upon a caucus, to suggest, "Our first ministry is X, our second ministry is Y, and we would like to devote so many hours to each." Then I'll proceed to the next and to the next.

**Mr Wiseman:** Okay. I'm not understanding something here.

**The Chair:** Before that comes to a final vote, there will be time to discuss it, but I find it a lot easier for the caucuses to give their feelings on the amount of time than it is to just throw it on the table and start discussing it. Is that helpful?

**Mr Wiseman:** I'm missing something.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wiseman:** Yes, but what I'm trying to understand here is, if they pick their two and say, "I want seven and a half hours each and that's it," there are only 15 hours in the first round—

**The Chair:** No, per caucus.

**Mr Wiseman:** Per caucus. All right, I've got you now.

**The Chair:** There are 45 hours in each round.

**Mr Wiseman:** Then we'll just go ahead.

**The Chair:** Great. Mr Cleary, are you ready to give your—

**Mr Cleary:** Yes, Mr Chairman. I guess that we'd like Agriculture and Food as number one and Housing as number two. Do you want a third one?

**The Chair:** Not at the moment. Do you have a preference for the amount of time you'd like to devote?

**Mr Cleary:** I sat on this committee back a few years ago, but I forget. Generally you did a day on each in the past. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** No, we can do a seven-and-a-half-hour ministry in two days if we're lucky. Seven hours we can do in two days, because we're from 3:30 till 6. I'm sorry, three days. We do a ministry a week if it's around seven and a half to eight hours. There is flexibility in there. But one day, we can only meet from 3:30 approximately until 6, so we only have two and a half hours per day. To do a ministry in one day, we gen-



erally should only devote about two and a half hours to it.

**Mr Cleary:** I'm a little bit at a disadvantage here because I'm only a sub on here now and I know that there are a number of issues on both these ministries and they want to discuss them. I don't know what to tell you. I think we would want more than two and half hours, though, with a ministry. I would think that.

**The Chair:** Okay. Between the two ministries, Mr Cleary, you have 15 hours. Perhaps I can ask if there are any opinions on the part of other members. Did they have any thoughts on how much time we'd like to devote on the two ministries? Anybody?

1600

**Mr Wiseman:** I just want to review this again in terms of how fast we can get through these.

**The Chair:** You mean just today?

**Mr Wiseman:** In the elements of being fair in terms of over the committee time that we have available. My view of this would be to try to get them all done within the time that we've allocated, that we've got left in terms of sitting, and what we hope to get when the House leaders sit down and decide how many weeks we're going to have in the summer. If we have an idea of how many total hours we have, we might be able to have some element of fairness in terms of equal possibilities, of having everybody have a chance at their selections.

**The Chair:** I have many letters to your House leader on that very subject, which I would be pleased to give to you, but the short answer is, at this late date, we will be lucky to get eight ministries done, maybe nine if everything goes well. That's where there's no disruptions, calls to the House during our committee time, no scheduling problems where a minister has to cancel. Where it's the minister, we can't start without the minister, and we respect that. There's some flexibility there.

We're starting later and later and later every year on this committee, and I've been on estimates now for the start of my ninth year. We used to have two estimates done by this time, this very week.

**Mr Wiseman:** In order to get to the eight or nine, how much time did you allocate for each ministry on an average basis?

**The Chair:** The standing orders speak—I apologize; I should have gotten copies of the standing orders so that I could direct you directly to them—to a total number of ministries and a total number of hours that can be allocated, up to an amount of 15 hours. We can allocate two hours to Agriculture and two hours to Housing. The standing orders say that can total 15, but we can decide it to be four. In the nine years, everybody's taken just about their full time.

When we table our report to the House, when we're

finally sitting down and doing it, we might decide to cut short by two hours a ministry because we've covered all the questions we have, but we have to report to the House the selection and the amount of time we wish to allocate. So it's a mathematical question, I guess: two rounds; there are 12 ministries; 45 hours maximum per round, which is 90 hours maximum.

We can only sit on Tuesdays and Wednesdays after routine proceedings. We need a special motion to sit past the hour of 6, and even that is highly suspect.

In all likelihood, we will not be able to call the first ministry until June 22 or June 23. This is why, if I didn't call the meeting for this week, we might not have gotten estimates started until October, because we come back in October. Do you see our problem now?

**Mr Wiseman:** I understand all that, but let's just make the picks.

**The Chair:** You are ready to continue? Mr Cleary, I'm seeing no recommendation of time. Might I suggest that you allocate six hours to Agriculture and nine hours to Housing? Is that helpful? If that's not helpful, would you give me two numbers, please.

**Mr Cleary:** Okay, I'll give you two. Can we change them after, do you think?

**The Chair:** Until this comes to a final vote, it can be amended. I would just like to proceed with this.

**Mr Cleary:** Okay, I'll go half and half on it.

**The Chair:** Seven and a half and seven and a half. Thank you.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Mr Chairman, a question. Is it normal procedure in your experience as a member of this committee over the last number of years—can two caucuses put forward one particular ministry? Is that normally done?

**The Chair:** It's a redundant point because your selection is made. I mean, you can waive if you no longer have any selections, but if one of your selections has been made, then you move to your next selection is usually what I used to do when I was a subcommittee member.

**Mr Arnott:** I guess my question is, all caucuses have an opportunity to ask questions during the course of the hours allocated?

**The Chair:** Oh yes, I'm sorry.

**Mr Arnott:** Fair enough. Our caucus would like to see 10 hours devoted to the Ministry of Health and five hours devoted to the Ministry of Labour in the first round.

**Mr Wiseman:** Women's issues and francophone affairs.

**The Chair:** I'm waiting.

**Mr Wiseman:** Seven and a half each.

**The Chair:** Okay. Mr Cleary, do you have two

additional selections to share with the committee?

**Mr Cleary:** Education and Training hasn't been taken, and Economic Development and Trade.

**The Chair:** And the amount of time, Mr Cleary?

**Mr Cleary:** The same.

**The Chair:** Seven and a half and seven and a half?

**Mr Cleary:** Yes.

**Mr Arnott:** Community and Social Services, 10 hours; Ministry of Natural Resources, five hours.

**Mr Wiseman:** Northern Development and Mines and Culture, Tourism and Recreation, half each.

**The Chair:** Okay, I will go through the list for members. In the first round, our first selection will be Agriculture, seven and a half hours; the second selection, the Ministry of Housing, seven and a half hours; the third selection, the Ministry of Health, 10 hours; the fourth selection, the Ministry of Labour, five hours; the fifth selection, the women's directorate, seven and a half hours; the sixth selection, francophone affairs, seven and a half hours.

Round two: the Ministry of Education and Training, seven and a half; the eighth selection, Economic Development, seven and a half hours; the ninth selection, Community and Social Services, 10 hours; the 10th selection, the Ministry of Natural Resources, five hours; the 11th choice, the Ministry of Northern Development, seven and a half hours; and the 12th and final selection, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, seven and a half hours.

May I receive a motion to submit that to the House?

**Mr Wiseman:** I'll move it.

**The Chair:** All those in favour? Opposed, if any? It's carried.

Is there any other business for the committee?

Since our budget speaks to requesting time, and the question has been raised about whether we have sufficient time to complete our estimates, it would be helpful to have a motion for us to write the House leaders now to request two weeks of summer sitting time. Can I have that motion?

**Mr Wiseman:** I'll move that.

**The Chair:** Any discussion? All those in favour? Carried.

The one piece of difficulty in all this of course is that the estimates books may not be ready, which is something we do not control. I'd just ask you to leave that in the Chair's hands to pursue. We will notify the first several ministries immediately to let them know that they've been selected, to determine, to ascertain that we need the estimates books immediately.

Secondly, is the committee is satisfied that the clerk will obtain those as quickly as possible and have them delivered to the caucus office, to the critic of record and to the subcommittee chair? Now we'll get them to everybody, of course, but immediately we want to get copies to your caucus office for your research department, a copy to the critic and a copy to the subcommittee representative. I don't want to hold things up while we're trying to chase copies around, while we're trying to get them in those people's hands.

We may not have a need to meet until we can confirm a commencement date. You might consider that it might be the 22nd or the 23rd to begin Agriculture, but out of courtesy we'll notify that ministry immediately. This motion might be ready to present to House tomorrow.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn has been received by Mr Abel. All those in favour? Carried. This meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1611.

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### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

\***Chair / Président:** Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South/-Sud PC)

\***Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

\*Abel, Donald (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

Bisson, Gilles (Cochrane South/-Sud ND)

Carr, Gary (Oakville South/-Sud PC)

Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

\*Haeck, Christel (St Catharines-Brock ND)

Jamison, Norm (Norfolk ND)

\*Lessard, Wayne (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

\*Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

**Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Cleary, John C. (Cornwall L) for Mr Mahoney

Wood, Len (Cochrane North/-Nord ND) for Mr Bisson

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** Nishman, Robert, research officer, Legislative Research Service



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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 23 June 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 23 juin 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Agriculture  
and Food

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Ministère de l'Agriculture et  
de l'Alimentation



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum



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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 23 June 1993

The committee met at 1608 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. This is the first of our estimates as chosen by the committee and approved by the House. We will be commencing with seven and a half hours of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

We're very pleased to welcome the minister, the Honourable Elmer Buchanan. As you know, you have up to half an hour in the first rotation and then the two opposition critics will be afforded up to half an hour each and we'll proceed in that fashion.

**Hon Elmer Buchanan (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I do have some staff in attendance. Perhaps I'll start off by introducing them.

Of course, most of you will know Rita Burak, who is the deputy minister, to my left; Ken Knox, assistant deputy minister, agriculture and rural division; Grahame Richards, who is the ADM, food industry division; Bob Séguin, ADM of policy and programs, and Bob is there; Norris Hoag, ADM of education, research and lab; David George, ADM of corporate services; Greg Brown, crop insurance and stabilization assistant general manager; Russell Duckworth, the chairman of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, a very important part of our operation, is not with us; Joan Krantzberg, director of the communications branch; David Thomson, director of resources and regulations branch; Len Roozen is here, director of policy analysis; Louise Stratford, legal services, is not with us yet; Richard Kirsh, general manager of financial planning secretariat; and Peter Rzakdi, manager of policy coordinations, is behind me.

I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to present the 1993-94 estimates for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Much has happened in the farming and food sector in the year since I last presented to this committee. Pressures brought on by global and domestic forces affecting the industry hit new heights in the past year. Specifically, we've had to deal with a sluggish recovery from the recession, uncertain trade relations and the demands of increasingly discriminating consumers.

In response, all of us—farmers, food processors, workers, retailers and government—have had to re-evaluate our priorities, refocus our efforts and reinforce our commitment to pursuing economic renewal and growth in the most forward-looking, cost-effective way possible.

At the same time, our rural communities recognize that they too have the resources and talents to regain their place as an integral part in the province's social and economic structure.

What we've seen and experienced over the past 12 months is not only a recognition that major change is taking place but a movement beyond this to dealing with change. Plans have been made, decisions taken and actions carried out throughout this sector, which is all too aware of the reality that it is no longer business as usual.

Intensifying competition from outside our borders has been a major factor in instilling a sense of urgency in our efforts to adjust and take charge of our future. The process has not been easy, and difficult choices have had to be made by everyone in view of the tight economic climate we've had to work in. But remarkably, out of the restructuring that is occurring has come a new cohesiveness. Rather than splinter into counter-productive camps, in several instances producers and processors, employers and workers, as well as farmers and other rural residents, have come together to share ideas and information on how they can thrive in a new, more competitive environment.

Today I'd like to take the committee through some of the ways my ministry has been an example of, and a catalyst for, reasoned approaches to change.

First I'd like to share with you an excellent example of the new spirit of cooperation that's growing in our industry. The Vision 2020 exercise started out as a way to get producers, processors, retailers, distributors and workers at a meeting where they could really talk to one another, find out what each other's needs were and perhaps find ways to make mutually beneficial alliances.

A conference was planned and presented in November by a committee of leaders drawn from the various parts of the food chain, including myself. The meetings were attended by an excellent cross-section of the entire industry, and with focused, lively table-group discussions, we all came out with more than just a better appreciation of one another; we came out with a sense of purpose and momentum to work together to deal with the challenges that we all share. That's why we've continued the process.

Just last week I met again with the Vision 2020 steering committee to be updated on their activities to pursue the Vision process and to plan for this year's conference. We're hoping to come up with a clear mission statement that can provide a substantial focus for the entire industry.



Since November, various industry players have taken it on themselves to open up the lines of communication between customers and suppliers throughout the food industry. It will be these industry-led efforts that will ultimately return this entire sector to long-term viability. I think the kinds of alliances being developed now will serve the entire industry well as it faces the increasingly intense competition for the consumer's food dollar. Recently, the ministry was restructured to improve our focus on serving clients in the context of the current economic realities.

After several months of assessing all of our services and programs and analysing long-term trends in the agriculture and food sector, we announced the changes in late April. Briefly, the changes include:

(1) Establishing a rural development secretariat to provide a stronger focus on encouraging rural communities towards self-directed economic renewal and investment in jobs. The secretariat draws on the existing staff and expertise and has field representatives as front-line contacts with local communities.

(2) We're consolidating the food standards and inspection services under the food industry division, which is responsible for market development and food industry competitiveness. This change puts together functions in the ministry that were already evolving closer together.

(3) We're incorporating the food and veterinary labs with the research and education functions.

(4) We're streamlining the agriculture and rural division to allow better communication among field offices and reduce the paper work for field staff. In this way, our technical experts have more time and flexibility to attend to the needs of farmers and rural communities.

These adjustments were made in order to position the ministry to deal effectively with current and future challenges in the industry and in the rural communities. They were made to maintain our high-quality service to the public while making the most of the taxpayers' dollar, and to ensure that the ministry was prepared to cope with government-wide measures to contain the provincial debt that we knew were on the way.

As the Finance minister has pointed out, we simply could not sustain a ballooning deficit which would hamper our ability in the long run to provide much-needed services. We had to act quickly and decisively, and my ministry has been able to respond with fairness and balance in its contributions to the overall government plans.

As you know, the deficit is being attacked on three fronts: controlling expenditures, raising revenues and negotiating a new social contract with the broader public sectors.

Under the expenditure control plan, the Ministry of

Agriculture and Food contributed \$52.9 million of its overall budget. While this is a significant sum, it is certainly no more than other ministries contributed. It amounts to 8.9% of our budget.

Our decisions on where the expenditure savings would come from were based on an examination of all our programs and services, as well as the ministry's internal operating expenses. As you may be well aware, about 70% of our budget goes directly to the farmers in the form of transfer payments.

I felt it was necessary to balance out fairly the effects of the reductions on both the industry and ministry staff, but I had to achieve my target. Closing the agricultural colleges at Centralia and New Liskeard and the associated veterinary laboratories was one of the most difficult decisions I've had to make as minister.

I simply could not justify, in these times of fiscal constraint, maintaining funding to five colleges, plus the agricultural diploma program at the University of Guelph, when both the number of farmers in the province and the number of students entering agricultural college have declined over the years. The combined enrolment of the colleges was about half their capacity for students. While I understand the disappointment and frustration of the colleges' staff, students and supporters, the closures were necessary.

As I said at the time, students going into their second year of study will graduate in 1994. Those who signed up at the two colleges will be offered opportunities at the other colleges. As for staff, we have set up redeployment teams to assist those affected by the closures with retraining plans, interviewing skills, résumé writing and job search techniques, as well as explain their entitlements under current legislation.

In terms of the colleges' research, extension and associated veterinary laboratory functions, consultations are under way between ministry staff and commodity groups to explore options for maintaining some services. Once these are complete, appropriate actions will be taken regarding these services.

The decision to reduce dairy inspection services was based on the maturity of the industry and the ministry's historically large contribution to the dairy sector in comparison to other commodity groups.

Ontario dairy farmers are scrupulous about the safety and quality of their product and have the expertise and technology to ensure high standards. We are working with the Ontario Dairy Herd Improvement Corp, the Ontario Milk Marketing Board and others to assure the public of an absolutely safe product. In addition, we are redirecting some resources to the new agriculture and food laboratory services centre in Guelph to enhance drug and contaminant testing and monitoring.

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In terms of the effects of expenditure controls in the



program areas, I was able to retain the farm tax rebate program, the ministry's largest single expenditure, taking up more than 40% of our transfer payments at last year's level.

The land stewardship program had already accomplished much of what it was designed to do: encourage farmers to use environmentally sound practices. These efforts have been augmented recently through a coalition of farm groups that have designed and are testing the farm environmental agenda.

We also saved a substantial amount from the agricultural investment strategy. Three of the components under the strategy had already been announced. The commodity loan guarantee program, which offers farmers credit at reasonable rates on flexible terms, was left untouched. Indeed, we are anticipating doubling the number of loans extended by the Agricultural Commodity Corp in 1993-94 over last year. This is in spite of increased competition from the banking community. The reductions will not affect the amount of credit available to farmers, or the government guarantees offered under the private mortgage guarantee or the upcoming rural loan program.

Savings will be realized by temporarily suspending payments to contingency funds, reducing the commitment to the education and expertise program and deferring the farmer apprenticeship program.

We also deferred, but did not eliminate, the exit adjustment component of the federal-provincial tobacco adjustment strategy. In light of the current and projected markets for tobacco this year, this seemed a reasonable decision.

Internal operating expenditures will be reduced through implementing more efficient operating methods. Attrition, early retirement and redeployment of staff will be used as much as possible to meet expenditure reduction targets.

As I said previously, these were not easy decisions to make. The days when the economy was buoyant, revenues were high and the government continually introduced new programs and services are gone. I think they're gone for good. Now, even with a substantial economic recovery, the public will demand a full accounting from the government of the need for and uses to which its hard-earned dollars are spent.

This leads me into talking about an initiative which I'm confident will prove a winner, because it puts government revenue right back into the long-term economic renewal and jobs in the communities that it came from. The Jobs Ontario Community Action initiative was announced by my colleague the Minister of Finance in the recent budget. As you know, we have dedicated \$300 million over the next three years for this initiative.

The idea behind it is to help communities help

themselves to a better future. It is unique in that the ideas and plans for renewal must come from people living in our communities. I think this makes good sense. Development that proceeds from the grass roots will inevitably be more focused, practical and cost-effective, and it will generate a sense of pride and accomplishment that cannot occur when decisions are made at some far-away centre.

The government's role will be to ensure these communities have the freedom, information and skills to proceed. This means breaking down bureaucratic barriers while helping build partnerships among various interests in the community. It means providing opportunities for leadership training, more flexible financing tools, advice and assistance on strategic planning, and more.

My ministry, with its traditionally close ties to rural communities, will continue and augment its role as a catalyst for change in rural Ontario. We have the expertise, organization and contacts that come from decades of close association with the agriculture and food sector and the communities it supports and depends on.

Under the Jobs Ontario initiative, my ministry will be working closely with the ministries of Municipal Affairs, Economic Development and Trade; Culture, Tourism and Recreation; and others. This kind of inter-ministerial cooperation is essential to avoid overlaps and ensure cohesiveness in the delivery of this initiative.

Our participation will be guided by the newly formed rural development secretariat that I spoke of earlier. The secretariat is supported by several local field staff called area contact team leaders, who are the front-line resource people for anyone interested in proposing development projects.

We have a head start in this regard, with programs in place that are designed to support the goals of community and economic development. The Ten Steps to Community Action program has been very successful in training new community leaders.

As you may know, this program brings together rural business people, teachers, workers, firefighters, farmers and others who are interested in renewing their community. The program gives them the opportunity to learn about leadership, organization, the administration of government, and building consensus in the community behind a cause. Not only do participants learn about these things, but often the people who take the course form the core of a network for community action.

Ten Steps has been very well received by the people who have completed the program. There are 25 projects on the go this year in various communities around the province, and more are asking for courses for next year.

In February, at the same time I announced funding for 18 of these projects, we contributed funding to two

ethanol feasibility studies in the Chatham and Cornwall areas, the creation of the three local business directories and one strategic plan.

There are a number of other areas we've been working on to encourage self-reliance and economic renewal in our rural communities: first of all, by encouraging the formation of cooperatives, an excellent vehicle for farmers to pool their resources and energy, and local communities to benefit from economic spin-offs. Recently, my ministry established a marketing co-op advisory service to provide business development advice for new and existing co-ops. This service is designed to help people in our agri-food industry add value to their products, become more competitive in global markets and invest in jobs here at home.

Secondly, we're broadening the role of credit unions and caisses populaires as a source of credit for budding farm and rural businesses. Under the education and expertise component of the agricultural investment strategy, my ministry is offering agricultural lending training to staff of these facilities. At the same time, I've been working with the Minister of Financial Institutions on developing legislation that will broaden the powers of these organizations; that is, the credit unions and caisses populaires. With this program, we hope to increase the availability of and decrease the cost of farm credit in the province.

Thirdly, we're providing opportunities under the rural loan pool program, another part of the agricultural investment strategy. This component is aimed at channelling savings of rural residents into a rural loan pool which would offer credit to agricultural small business at reasonable rates and on flexible terms. With this program, we hope to encourage on-farm, value added ventures to stimulate the rural economy and investment in jobs. A pilot project will be announced very soon.

Rural community development, whether it's in Smiths Falls, Chatham or Parry Sound, depends on the willingness of rural residents, business people, farmers, schools and financial institutions and governments to work together for the good of the whole community.

No single person or government agency can prescribe a panacea that will guarantee instant success in creating economic activity or jobs or raising the quality of life in the towns and villages that dot our rural landscape. Each community, like each individual, has its own strengths, and progress likely won't be made in leaps and bounds but by building on small successes. But these small successes, when taken together, can change the rural landscape.

It will take patience, persistence, and a whole lot of good will to reverse the decades of neglect in many of our rural communities. But I think that now, with this government's recognition of the potential for growth in our small communities and with the increasing thrust for

change we've seen among rural residents, we can and will make a difference.

Encouraging greater stability and growth in our agriculture and food sector goes hand in hand with bolstering our rural communities. While farming is not the sole reason for the existence of rural communities, it continues to play an integral role in their economic and social health.

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Our safety net programs, as you may know, are designed to protect our farmers from severe fluctuations in the market and in weather conditions. Last year the weather, for many farmers, was absolutely atrocious. The huge losses suffered in 1992 really tested our crop insurance program, and I'm pleased to say that it passed with flying colours. Claim totals for the 1992 crop year are estimated to reach about \$145 million. This is massive, especially when you consider that the total for all previous claims since the program began in 1967 was about \$500 million. That's the total accumulated claims. The protection was there when farmers needed it most.

Much of the credit must go to the work of Crop Insurance Commission of Ontario, which does a fine job of keeping the program attuned to the needs of farmers. The changes it made increasing coverage levels for many commodities was very timely, considering the devastation caused by the weather of 1992.

At the same time, I'm pleased to report that the net income stabilization account program, which allows farmers to accumulate funds during good years to offset losses in bad years, was extended to cover onions and white beans. The decision was made last November at a meeting of federal and provincial agricultural ministers. At the meeting, I once again strongly advocated the concept of extending this program to as many commodities as possible. Not only is this fairer to all farmers but it stands us in good stead in international trade relations.

As effective as they are, safety nets are not a total solution to all the challenges that face the industry. Farmers and food processors have had to struggle with the effects of economic stagnation, shifting international trade patterns and stiffening foreign competition for longer than most other sectors.

Since the early 1980s, there has been a significant decline in the number of farms, combined with downsizing and restructuring in the processing side of the sector. This has prompted individuals, groups and companies throughout the sector to focus in on strategies that will allow them to survive, compete and win markets.

Progressive farmers realize that in order to stay in business, they must know about market demand and strategic planning, along with the most effective tech-



niques for raising crops and livestock. With their shrinking numbers, they recognize the value of banding together to share information, plan for the future and speak with a unified voice about those issues they confront as a group.

This is why I was so pleased recently to introduce the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act. Stable funding, as it is known by the farming community, will ensure that Ontario's general farm organizations receive the kind of financial support they need to continue serving all Ontario farmers. It will also help the government do our job by providing accurate information about the farming community.

While I acknowledge that it has been a rough ride getting this concept to the legislative stage, I think that now we have an effective method of securing much-needed funding for the important research, education and policy advisory work of the general farm organizations.

I note that the leaders of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and the National Farmers Union, along with myself and my staff, have worked long hours together getting this legislation to this stage. I might add at this point that I also have worked with the opposition members from rural Ontario, who have been most helpful in getting this legislation to the stage it's at now. As with any major change, it took a lot of courage and diplomacy on all sides to arrive at a workable solution. In the end, I'm confident this legislation will benefit the farmers of Ontario.

Exciting events are happening as well in the food processing sector. This year the ministry released a report card on the food processing strategy, which was designed to improve the competitiveness of the industry while creating a viable and growing market for agriculture food products.

This strategy came out of the Food Industry Advisory Committee's work, which identified a number of concerns about competitiveness the industry had and potential responses to these concerns. Now in year three, the five-year strategy has brought together many stakeholders in the industry, including producers, processors, retailers and others, in an ambitious bid to retain and improve on Ontario's place as a vital food production centre.

The strategy tackles seven fundamental conditions that must be present for a firm or industry to maintain or increase its market share: competitively priced raw products; a conducive business climate; quality food products; education and training; research and development; skilled marketing and financial abilities; and efficient plants and equipment.

The report outlines some very encouraging results in every single category. I'm proud of my ministry's

involvement in making them happen, and here are a few of the results.

In terms of competitive pricing, our Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission has fostered better relations between producers and processors by helping establish 17 commodity advisory committees to work out issues of mutual concern.

Through the activities of our business development unit, the ministry has assisted education and training efforts by introducing more than 450 employees of Ontario food processors to 200 new processing technologies. More than 50 of the companies involved have adopted new technologies, resulting in the launch of eight new products.

In research and development, \$3 million of our Ontario food processing research fund has supported 30 projects and leveraged \$2.5 million in other funding and the in-kind contribution to processing research.

In terms of supporting marketing and financial management capabilities, my ministry continues an aggressive export development program. In the past two years, we've worked with more than 200 outgoing and incoming trade missions, involving nearly 2,000 participants from the agrifood industry. More than 40 destination markets were involved, resulting in total sales exceeding \$220 million.

We have been helping Ontario food processing companies upgrade their technologies through the food industry financial assistance program. Since 1991, 42 farms have benefited from the \$6.7 million allocated under the program, leveraging more than \$56 million in private investment.

While we're working hard on a number of fronts at home to help the industry and rural communities survive and thrive in the 1990s, it is more than a little disconcerting that our international trade relations are in such disarray. The GATT negotiations drag on. The lack of action is causing grief, anxiety and, worst of all, continued low prices for many of our farm products.

The prospect of a new chair at the GATT may infuse some fresh ideas into the talks. However, it still seems as if many nations of the world are more interested in bickering than in coming to any agreement. In spite of all this, my ministry stands by our commitment to a fair and balanced outcome in these multilateral trade talks.

In direct contrast to the foot-dragging at the GATT is the runaway momentum of the North American free trade agreement, largely fuelled by our overly eager federal government. Recently, things have slowed down considerably, with the US insisting on side deals to compensate for an agreement that they know will put downward pressure on their environmental and labour standards. Even with these side deals, the people of Ontario believe that it is not a good agreement.

As you know, I chaired a committee that asked

Ontarians just what they thought of the NAFTA. The answer is: Not much. People are still stinging from the Canada-US free trade agreement with its massive job losses and continuing trade harassments. They're not in any mood to exacerbate the situation by jumping into another deal that has few recognizable benefits and too many drawbacks.

For example, just last week yet another FTA panel on the US hog countervail ruled that our national tripart stabilization program, as it pertains to Canadian live swine exported to the US in 1989-90, is countervailable. This is in direct contrast to an earlier panel ruling that said the program was not countervailable. In the end, Ontario and Canadian swine producers have to suffer the consequences of unfair trade actions by our US neighbours, with reduced markets for their high-quality products. This is yet another example of how our industries, and particularly our farmers, have had to submit to antagonistic duties and long, drawn-out dispute resolution proceedings in the name of free trade. It makes you wonder where the "free" in the free trade agreement was supposed to come from.

In spite of the tough economic circumstances of the past year, some very encouraging changes are taking place. The various players in the industry are beginning to work together in profitable cooperation rather than antagonistic distrust. The ministry is streamlining and focusing more closely on the future and our clients' needs. Farmers are finding strength in numbers and the value of supporting their own efforts in research and education and providing the government with sound policy advice. Many rural communities are recognizing their own strengths and are building towards economic self-reliance and growth. Food processors are finding innovative strategic methods for increasing their productivity, efficiency and market share.

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I'm pleased that my ministry will continue playing an integral role in helping the industry and our rural communities to economic and social health and growth.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. We have some minor adjustments to our regular rotation, and with the committee's indulgence we'll let Mr Villeneuve go next, with up to 30 minutes, and then we yield to the Liberals, who have two members who wish to contribute.

**Mr Noble Villeneuve (S-D-G & East Grenville):** Thank you very much, Mr Chair, Mr Minister and people with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. It's always nice to get together with you, particularly following a couple of very difficult financial years, not only within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food but within the industry of agriculture and food and food processing.

The minister, I think, touched on a number of subjects that I certainly want to expand on a little bit. I

guess just as you were winding up, Minister, it's interesting to note that you are very unhappy, based on the money that you spent with a government committee, and I emphasize a government committee, travelling the province, exploring the thoughts and activities surrounding NAFTA. I believe that in many instances, yes, the free trade deal did provide some awakening, if nothing else, to the fact that we cannot isolate ourselves. Certainly, in the most recent court decision I think, again, there's been a flip-flop there, and right now our producers stand again to lose.

However, there's been a marked increase in export activity in the food industry to the United States of America, I think in good proportion due primarily to the deal that is now in place. The minister decries the fact that there are extenuating discussions regarding the correction and the appeal process regarding countervailing or non-countervailing action. But we do have a so-called fast-track process within the free trade deal which is to some degree making those decisions come about quicker. Without the agreement, I don't know where we would be. We would probably be stuck in the courts for many years.

So those are some of the pros and cons. Yes, agriculture has had to adjust to some difficult decisions, as has basically the entire economy. We are in a worldwide recession, and certainly Canada and Ontario have felt the crunch of that recession.

Farmers, as we compare the social contract that the government is attempting to negotiate with the greater public service, have suffered considerable reductions in income over the last 12 or more years. We go back to the grain prices of the early 1980s, and we notice that those prices 12 and 13 years ago were considerably in excess of what they are right now. So farmers have suffered considerable reductions in gross and net incomes. Their costs of production have not decreased. They have had to do some belt tightening on an annual basis.

Following a year like last year, where the heat units were considerably less than they should have been and the moisture was considerably more—and heaven forbid we're going into another year very similar to it again this year—the anticipated costs of crop insurance were estimated to be somewhere around \$100 million. I notice from the minister's comments that they're up to \$145 million. If another year like that occurs, I believe we'll have to look at not only the crop insurance program but the third line of defence program, because that is probably going to be shaken right to its very roots.

Bill 162 is not within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's purview—it is very, very annoying to many people who are directly involved in earning a living in agriculture—it is under the Ministry of Natural Resources. I'm not sure what sort of communications



are occurring there between the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

We have had a number of very concerned bona fide farmers, particularly those in the production of native species deer, and I know the minister's concerned. I've had the opportunity of discussing it with him on a number of occasions. Certainly, Bill 162 is up in the imminent future for, I believe, second reading. There has not been a great deal of input and listening to by the Ministry of Natural Resources. In my opinion, they are encroaching on your ministry, sir, and I think we have to look at that very seriously.

The farm tax rebate has been frozen at \$159 million, and we all know that the taxes will not be frozen as paid by the farmers. I think it leaves us in a very vulnerable position as people who earn a living in agriculture in that the farm tax rebate, to start with, is not a support program. It is simply a rebate of taxes that were paid, covering school tax on farm land and farm buildings.

I was personally very annoyed when the previous government brought it in and made it look like farm agriculture support. It never was and never was intended to be. That occurred and made the budget of your ministry, sir, in Agriculture and Food, look like it was handling and supporting agriculture to the tune of \$160 million plus, when indeed it was simply a correcting of bookkeeping, a return of moneys that were paid by farmers.

The Sewell report is very annoying to rural Ontario, including farmers. We cover a broader number of people here in the Sewell report in that the Sewell report, I gather, will be under administration by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs but certainly is going to shape the future and the future activity of rural Ontario. I think the Ministry of Agriculture and Food must get a lot more actively involved in whatever follows and is a continuum of the application of the Sewell report, the final edition of which was received at my office this week. I must confess I have not had the opportunity of looking at it as closely as I would have liked.

The labour changes that occurred under Bill 40, I gather, are now falling into line, as they will affect the food production and processing industry. The minister, in his opening remarks, alluded to becoming more efficient and more economically acceptable for our processors to stay in business.

Well, this law will be administered by the Ministry of Labour, again an encroachment on your ministry, sir. I have some difficulty in having labour police or whoever, with very little knowledge of the processing or the production of food, involved in imposing some requirements on our processors and our producers.

On the deadstock pickup area I have spoken to the minister on numerous occasions. He knows there's a

problem. It's not been corrected. It's not been mentioned, but we do have a major problem here and I believe again a problem that seems to be at your doorstep. However, it involves Health, it involves Environment, it involves Municipal Affairs and I believe will have to be addressed in the very near future.

In the area that I live in and that I represent, we had a major landslide last Sunday, where approximately three kilometres of the South Nation River were totally clogged. There's been a backup to a depth of about 28 feet of water now in the South Nation River. It is starting to make its way through the earthslide, will create major problems for towns like Plantagenet that get their water supply from the South Nation.

I don't know how many dairy farmers are along the South Nation but I go back to the days when I worked for the Farm Credit Corp and that area was one where I did a lot of appraisal work and credit advising. That is the area known as the Champlain Sea. It was a salt water ocean many years ago. The South Nation River came through and drained it to the Ottawa and subsequently into the Atlantic.

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But what we have here in a lot of those dairy farming areas, if you go to any depth at all for a dug or a drilled well, you will get very heavy concentrations of salt. These dairy farmers have been using the South Nation River as their primary source of watering livestock. They have also in some cases been treating it and using it as their potable water. These people will be at someone's door in the very near future with a major problem.

I recall well the landslide again of 1971, much less in volume. But the South Nation, as you know, floods very intensively in the spring. What occurred was that the silting and the debris from the previous year's landslide was left on a lot of the farm land, ditches were blocked, new seeding was choked up with 10 to 12 inches of silt being left on top of the land. These are problems that the Ministry of Agriculture, along with the seven or eight other ministries, will definitely have to address in the imminent future.

I know there's some very close monitoring occurring right now by the South Nation River Conservation Authority, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment and Energy, but we've got to be ready for bad news on that one. I think the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has to be one of the lead ministries, because you're the ministry that does have the hands on in the area.

The restraints that occurred touched—and the minister, I know, is very concerned—about 10% in your ministry last year and another 10% this year. I was participating in the debate on Bill 48 last night and I have to compliment the minister and the ministry on

adhering to the requests and the requirements as set out by the Minister of Finance.

But most other ministries within the government of Ontario did not suffer cutbacks. They actually cost considerably more to run in many instances. With a 10% cutback that you initiated and put into action last year and again this year, had every ministry within this province been able to adhere to those requirements, the government of Ontario would not have a deficit problem. We would be able to balance the budget. Now, it was done at the expense of many people who are involved directly and indirectly in agriculture, and certainly they were not the recipients, as I said earlier, of boom economic times.

In the dairy industry, which is probably one of the most stable within agriculture, there have been cutbacks in the market-sharing quota on an annual basis, save and excepting most recently when indeed they were able to continue. But we have to look at people who are having their ability to sell milk cut back by 4%, 5%, and 6% on an annual basis on the industrial portion of their production, and having to go back and purchase a quota to simply maintain their cash flow. They're going through some hard times.

The red meat producers are having a better year, but there never is a boom year in that particular industry, simply because prices, as soon as they get to the level where they have been for the last 10 years, receive some consumer resistance.

Do you want me to ask some questions? I have a number of questions I think are fairly legitimate. My colleague Mr Murdoch wants just a bit of time.

**The Chair:** Mr Villeneuve, you have up to 30 minutes in your opening statements to use in any way you wish. According to our clock, you have another 12 or 13 minutes.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Centralia and New Liskeard colleges have proposals now to cut costs quite considerably and maintain colleges. I must ask the minister and his staff, firstly, have you met with them to explore these possibilities? Secondly, when will you be able to do this? It's my understanding that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Finance have been able to meet with large groups of local farmers. They were not in very good humour, but he did meet with them.

Your ministry has control of the budget that looks after these, and I would certainly look for your answer and this may well be coming shortly. When will you be able to meet with these two colleges that have had their fate pretty well upset by closure? Also, we have a number of students where we understand litigation is occurring, students who had been accepted at these colleges. First, is there indeed litigation? Second, what is the ministry doing to correct this or to address it?

Severe restraints have been imposed on the ministry and you've adhered to them. What's the status of the ethanol initiative? Certainly the two grants that were provided to Chatham and Cornwall were most welcome. We're ready to proceed now. Certainly the Cornwall area is ready to go. What sort of assistance would be available and forthcoming from the ministry?

The Fair Tax Commission has failed to propose any reforms to the taxation of agricultural land which is actively used in farming. Given that the municipal tax burden has been growing and that the budget for the farm property tax rebate program is frozen, has your ministry initiated any rebate on the reform to farm property taxes?

Ministry cutbacks have killed any chance for a conservation program for the agricultural land in the Niagara region. Do you, Minister, have any other proposals to deal with that situation? I believe you're aware—I won't go into any great detail.

The food trade deficit: Trade with the US has shown dramatic improvement in Ontario's favour in recent years. I think several factors are responsible for that: a lower Canadian dollar and the free trade deal. Yet Ontario's trade deficit with the rest of the world has been going in the wrong direction. With Mexico in particular, our deficit is growing dramatically. I have tables here to prove that and I'm sure the minister knows that.

It would seem that free trade has helped to deal with the Americans, and we can bring up some negatives.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** You're talking about the steel industry—

**Mr Villeneuve:** Yes, I realize that, but we're talking about food, which to some people may not be very important, but we all sit down to three good meals a day and sometimes very much forget where they come from.

Minister, you toured the province with a group of government people and you have come out foursquare against NAFTA. I think we need more information on that.

Bills 63, 64 and 65 I believe we will be addressing a little bit more, but the future of AgriCorp—it would be interesting to find out what your ministry intends to do there. What's the status of the legislation?

On the agricultural commodity program, what is the approximate value of loans processed to this point in 1993? I know it was initiated last year. It came in with a great deal of fanfare but there wasn't a very large amount of money that was used up. What is the uptake this year?

The tobacco industry: In May 1992 the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, along with Agriculture Canada, introduced an extension of the tobacco diversification program. The costs shared, the funding at \$32 million,



will be provided for farmers who diversify to other crops. What's happening in that particular area?

The community economic development program, which was announced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who also introduced Bill 40: I realize that you have sat down with the agricultural people and come up with something that appeared to be palatable. I'm not sure how well that will work. There's been some briefing but I wasn't able to attend the briefings, and I'm very concerned about that one, particularly the fact that it's being implemented by the Ministry of Labour.

I'd like to yield to my colleague from Grey here for the remainder of my time.

1700

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey):** Thanks, Noble. I just have two or three points that I'd like to bring up, and some of it is what Noble has already mentioned.

The Sewell report: I think there are a lot of problems with that. When he talks about farm severances and things like that, he never took in the economics of the farming. He didn't even look at that. It's fine to save good farm land, I agree, but we also have to have the farmers paid enough to keep to work on the farm. It's not just good enough to save the land; we've got to have somebody farming it. He didn't look into that when he talked in his report about severances in the rural area and things like that, so I think you have to take that into consideration when you look at the report and how it impacts this ministry. That was one.

Another one I wanted to note on the Sewell report, and Mr Penfold did some comments that finally came out that I think I'd like to put on the record, was that Grey county seemed to get blamed for all the severances in Ontario. We took the brunt of it up there, but if you notice, Mr Penfold said that if you take the size of Grey and look at other areas, other counties and other regions, Grey wasn't so bad after all, that there were six or seven other counties—and we won't get into where they are—that were as bad or as good, whichever way you wanted to take it, as Grey. For some reason they wanted to pick on Grey, and I guess it took a professional person to finally get it across to some of the bureaucrats here at Queen's Park that Grey wasn't the bad person in all this after all.

I just wanted to note that, because we've been saying that for a long time but just couldn't seem to get that across, and maybe since Penfold was hired by the government, they'll listen to him.

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** It wasn't a black and white situation.

**Mr Murdoch:** Well, maybe it wasn't, but whatever. It was grey, eh? I just wanted to get that on the record, because finally somebody listened to us.

**Ms Christel Haack (St Catharines-Brock):** How dark is it?

**Mr Murdoch:** How dark is grey, yes. It's a light grey now with these other ones coming into it now, and we won't get into where they are, but I'm sure the minister will know.

The third point is that we've had some problems also in our area that in the past the government has always complained that we don't have enough zoning bylaws and stuff like that. Well, in Grey and Bruce now a couple of the municipalities are working on their zoning bylaws, and they get them all ready to go and, lo and behold, the Ministry of Agriculture is going to object to them because in them it says that 50 acres could be used as a viable farm. That's why they're objecting. They think it maybe has to be 100 or whatever. I'd like someone here to explain to me what acreage there needs to be for a viable farm, because if you're in asparagus I don't think you need 50 acres, but maybe you do if you're in something else.

So we have concerns in our riding on that. I hope the minister will look into that and have his staff do so. We seem to have a problem there. Sydenham, the township of which I was reeve for 10 years, has finally got a zoning bylaw all ready to go, and the only problem is that the Ministry of Ag and Food says, "Oh, oh, you can't do this because you have in there that 50 acres is a viable farm." Maybe you've already looked into that, but if you haven't, I hope you will. There also is another municipality in Bruce county—I can't remember the name of it—having the same problem.

Another one I wanted to mention is that the conservation authorities did come up with a program they thought could save the ministries a lot of money. Ag and Food was included in that, because sometimes the mandates of the conservation authority overlap with the Ministry of Ag and Food and I think in some cases money is wasted because both of them are trying to look after the same problem. Hopefully, the ministry will look at what the conservation authorities are coming up with to try to save money in not necessarily duplication of programs but overlapping of programs; maybe we can do them a little better and save money for both. I hope you'd look at that and maybe as the minister sit down with the Association of Conservation Authorities of Ontario some time and try and work out some of the problems they think they have.

The last one I want to mention is that Bill 162, and Noble mentioned that, I think is getting into your jurisdiction in some places. I understand that it's to come back for second reading and then maybe go out to the public, but hopefully somewhere along the line the two ministries can get together and try to solve the problems there so that the people who are affected by Bill 162, especially farmers—that somehow it's taken out and looked after with a bill from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food or something like that; that at least you get your say in there and get that bill so it's

better prepared. Those are the only things I want to put on the record. I thank you for the time. We're probably pretty nearly out of time anyway, by the look of the Chairman. I'll just thank you for listening to me.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Mr Villeneuve, there are about four minutes left.

**Mr Villeneuve:** If there are four minutes left, the one area I neglected to mention was the Ontario Stock Yards. The Ontario Stock Yards, I saw in a press release here, will be history at the end of the year. I would like to know, first of all, what did they cost the government directly, and what benefit will that be? I think there will be considerable benefits here once they are closed down.

I want the minister to know, and I'm sure he's probably well aware of it, that the farming community is split on the closure of the stock yards. We certainly have different producers, particularly sheep producers, who have used the Toronto stock yard to their advantage. I gather now that the processing of sheep is done basically 50% here in Toronto and 50% in other areas, but it's been a real good price-setter for the sheep industry. The livestock industry in eastern Ontario still likes that Toronto stock yard for finished steers. The areas west of Toronto use other areas, primarily Kitchener, and the electronic marketing system, which they find quite satisfactory.

So we do have some farmers who are at somewhat different conclusions. Eastern Ontario primarily and basically wants to see the stock yards stay open. Western Ontario doesn't care; as a matter of fact, probably is looking for them to close down. They will be closing down, I gather, and I would just like the minister to address that.

**Mr Murdoch:** Can I mention that Grey and Bruce also would like to see them stay open. That's something I missed too, Noble. I mentioned that in a statement in the House some time ago, that our sheep producers do feel they're well looked after at the Toronto stock yards. Hopefully, something can be done to help them out, because Grey and Bruce I think are the highest sheep-producing counties in Ontario so I hope the minister can do something to help them out.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Their politicians are not sheep.

**The Chair:** I believe that's a good note to end that round on. I will recognize Ms Fawcett.

**Mrs Joan M. Fawcett (Northumberland):** Thank you, Minister, for being here. I'm pleased to participate and put forward our party's concerns, and certainly the Liberal caucus does have a number of concerns with the NDP's proposed estimates for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

I think last year we had a 6% decrease in the funding in the ministry, and it was the first time there was a decline in Agriculture since the Tories had been in

office; I know our government had increased the budget. Now here we are facing another reduction in the budget, and I know farmers everywhere are very, very concerned because it seems they always are bearing the brunt. We know the government does face severe financial pressures, but it would seem that the NDP has chosen the farmers to bear this brunt of the government's restraint.

While Agriculture's funding seems to be declining, some of the other ministries did see a slight increase. I wonder how the minister can justify a reduction in his budget when, for instance, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations received a 1.7% increase and also Management Board received a 1.4% increase. We really feel that Agriculture cannot stand any more reductions.

I've noticed that the programs the Ministry of Agriculture does provide are well managed, especially, often, because it's the farmers who do manage them and they manage them well. I would hope that maybe we can explore more of those kinds of programs, because they are managed with a minimal cost.

#### 1710

It would seem that this budget for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is to be reduced by approximately 2.6%, or \$15 million in operating and capital, whereas the overall government operating expenditures are decreasing by less than 0.2%. Agriculture spending is being cut by 10 times as much as the overall government operating budget. Again, we wonder why Agriculture is bearing the brunt.

Our caucus does recognize the need for restraint at this time. That is why, in the recent vote upstairs, we voted against Bill 48. We really feel you're not going to achieve the wonderful amount that you think you are going to achieve, and we feel there is another way. There's another way too that possibly you could have saved some of the money in the Agriculture budget, and that's if some of the other areas that happened over the two years had been managed differently.

For instance, there was the 14% raise in salaries and benefits for OPSEU, costing the taxpayers over \$500,000 annually, and now we're trying to claw this back. And there are other things, like \$26 million to buy out the private day care operators; that didn't really create anything, and certainly in rural Ontario day care is often a problem to provide and we really do need the option for the private sector to become involved. And I was glad to hear you mentioning Jobs Ontario. I keep hoping that really is going to get on track, but it just seems it's not flexible enough. Even the money that's allocated, that \$1.1 billion, is sitting there not being used because of the restrictions and the inflexibility of the program.

So I hope things like that could be looked at instead of our constant cuts, it would seem, in the field of



agriculture. You did mention that your crop insurance plan had passed with flying colours. I'm happy to hear that, but then I'm hearing from the apple growers that things are not just the best there, that while they did have a fair crop in some areas, I understand that there are just hundreds of bins that are no good because they've found that the apples are brown inside. A lot of the apple growers who have been hit hard are really devastated by the fact that what they thought they were going to sell is now absolutely useless. I hope we can really look at the crop insurance plan and make it better for the farmers.

I was glad also to hear of the minister's commitment in keeping Ontario's position in the GATT negotiations front and centre. There are a lot of farmers who are very, very concerned about that. It leaves them in such a state of not knowing whether to invest again, how much to invest and whether they really are going to be protected or whether the big hammer is just going to come down on them.

Farm tax rebate is always an interesting debate. We had rumours that maybe it was going to be wiped out this year and then we see that at least it is there. I'm wondering if the ministry is looking at a real, effective change in the taxation of farm land, how that is all being looked at. I really think that would be a good thing if we could just change that whole structure for the farmers: rather than making them afraid that it's going to be there or isn't going to be there and so on, just changing it once and for all to make it really effective.

On the college closures, I know that the minister had to really perhaps agonize over this one, being in the education field himself. I noted with interest that in the estimates design here the two colleges are still listed. I don't know, is that an omen?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** They are still there. We haven't blown them off the map.

**Mrs Fawcett:** You haven't blown them off the map. You mean there's hope? Really? I don't have to be reading any more petitions? At any rate, it has been a blow. It's been a blow for the students; it's been a blow for the professors and teachers there.

I know the minister said the students presently enrolled in the college who wouldn't be graduating are going to be accommodated in the remaining colleges and I guess I wonder, is there going to be room? Is there going to be room in the different courses, because I'm sure there's maybe room in the actual college, but what happens if a course a student really needs is full? Has that all been taken into consideration as you close down the two colleges and what is being taught there?

Is there any way and have you thought of even correspondence courses? I know a few students expressed the problem to me that they won't be able to

afford to go away to these colleges that are far away. Some of them come home on the weekend to help in the operation of their farms, so this is really going to be a problem for them. Is it possible that some of the courses can be taken by correspondence and, if so, are we looking at that?

On the stable funding, that's in an interesting state right now with whether or not—and I'm glad to see my colleague has arrived. There seems to be certainly support for the bill and yet there are, as usual, the concerns expressed again over the mandatory vote that doesn't seem to be there.

I would like to say at this time—and I can only go by the phone calls I received from members of the National Farmers Union. They called to say they were not invited to all of the meetings that were being staged and they felt they were shut out of the final decision on the stable funding bill. I was rather surprised that they were not invited to attend every meeting, if that is in fact true, if for no other reason than to just allow them to at least have their democratic say in this.

The section of the bill that says a review may take place in three years: I would really like to see that firmed up and say it will take place, that it really will be looked at in all aspects in three years.

I know that in the Ministry of Environment and Energy some of the laws that are coming forward, the environmental bill of rights, pesticide laws and so on are a concern to farmers because sometimes I think farmers feel laws are being created here at Queen's Park within four walls and with no real knowledge of what is happening on the farm and how they can even really adhere to some of the laws that are being asked of them.

I know the whole industry is going through difficult times and we know that revenues are fluctuating, but I guess we really again, as a caucus, want agriculture to be not one of the lowest priorities of this government but one of the highest ones since one in five jobs is related to agriculture, as we know, and there are so many spinoffs. I think these are just a few of the highlights.

**1720**

I have a couple of general questions and hopefully we can get into specifics later on, and I know my colleague may want to put a few things on the record too. But I guess I would like to know why Agriculture took a bigger hit than some of the other ministries and whether or not the minister supports the cuts the cabinet had to make.

Also, as far as the stockyards go, this does cut into the fact that they will be leaving the demand for lamb sales in Toronto going to serve the ethnic food market and wondering if something is going to be put in its place there for the sheep farmers because the sheep

farmers are saying that the Toronto buyers will not go outside of Toronto to do this.

I'll turn it over now to my colleague because he may want to say a few things, I'm sure.

**The Chair:** Mr Cleary, welcome.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** Sorry I'm late.

**Mrs Fawcett:** An important meeting, I understand.

**Mr Cleary:** Anyway, I welcome this opportunity. I guess my colleague Joan has talked a little bit about the stable funding bill and what we'd like is an update on that, when that's going to happen or if it's going to happen. As Joan my colleague has said, there is a bit of opposition to it, and the farmers who have been talking to me would like an opportunity to have that explained to them in rural parts of Ontario.

I'm sorry I missed the first part of this, but the other thing I've been really concerned about is the dairy inspectors, and we would like the figure on that. We hear all kinds of numbers on how many dairy inspectors will be left in this province, and I have a feeling, the way my spies count them up, they can only count about nine or 10 that are left out of the 35.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** Let's allow Mr Cleary to make his presentation directly through the Chair, please.

**Mr Cleary:** I guess the other thing that surfaces in rural Ontario all the time is the ag offices. We would like to know what the ministry's intentions are in those offices. We hear little rumbles that we don't really like, and I guess it would be a good opportunity to ask that question. If there are plans for more closures, if there are plans for combining them, we would like to know that.

I guess another thing that we hear from time to time is about bankruptcy figures, and we would just like to know where they stand. You should have those figures now probably for 1992. We'd like to know if they're up or down and the state of that. We'd also like to ask a few questions about the long- and the short-term debts of the farmers.

Another thing we should also be concerned about is—we have lots of questions on it—the labour legislation. Is there an addition coming to the bill or is that going to be done by regulation, or how is that going to work? It's a big concern in some of the commodity groups. The farm community is having a very tough time to compete now. I guess we'd like to know if that's going to be separate legislation.

The other thing I would like to know, and we've been talking about it for some time, I get questioned on it reasonably often and I have to make my statement to the minister here: In April the minister told the silent majority that under Bill 42, if a farmer sent his cheque to a farm organization but marked it for direct deposit

back to the farmer on the back of the cheque, he would still qualify for a valid fee payment. I guess that's kind of a question.

One other thing that they're concerned about: As you know, there have been a number of agricultural people, farmers working on some ethanol projects in this province. They are led to believe that there's going to be a new program out to assist them financially to get these plants under way. I'm just wondering if there was something we were missing on that. It's something similar, possibly, to the Ten Steps to Community Action program or one of these programs. We were just wondering how soon that might be available if that's the case.

Another thing we should mention here is that the ministry has conducted its own review of agricultural planning. I guess we would like an update on that if that's the case. Does the minister intend to bring those planning initiatives forward?

Another thing that we hear about is a reorganization in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, a new rural development secretariat. I guess we would kind of like to know the job description and what they do.

Another thing that's on a lot of farmers' minds is the gross revenue insurance plan and municipal-industrial strategy for abatement. One thing, there have been some indications that some of the other provinces may drop out of GRIP. I was just wondering what Ontario's position is on that.

I don't know how much longer I've got here.

**The Chair:** Seven minutes.

**Mr Cleary:** Seven minutes? Do you want—

**Mrs Fawcett:** The only thing I would mention would be the Sewell report, whether the minister agrees with the Sewell report and whether he would like to see a few changes there.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** Please continue, Mr Cleary.

**Mr Cleary:** Okay. The other thing that's on a lot of the residents' minds is the farm tax rebate. We know it has been frozen for this year, and I guess we would like to know what the future of it is, if there is a future. We'd like some kind of indication from the minister of what might happen next year.

Under the stable funding, will there be any environmental issues or anything tied to this in this questionnaire that we're supposed to be getting or supposed to see which I don't know—speaking for myself, I haven't seen it yet—that will be going out?

1730

The other thing that I mentioned last night in the House was to do with the food industry development, where the budget announced that the government would be shutting down its foreign trade offices. I guess we



would like to know how this is going to affect your ministry and how it's going to affect agriculture.

The other thing we should talk about—and we've had some meetings with some of the residents of Ontario—is that the minister decided to ban a number of the tests on animals under the new regulations to the Animals for Research Act. There are a number of different stories out there. While we've got the minister here, we should find out the right one.

My colleague has also mentioned the stockyards. That seemed to be a big concern to the sheep growers, especially in southwestern Ontario.

**Mr Murdoch:** Grey and Bruce too.

**Mr Cleary:** Grey and Bruce too? I'll let you handle that.

The other thing that we should bring up here—it's been a big issue, although it may have died down a bit at the moment—is the dead livestock removal, what the position is on that. I know we had talked to the minister, a colleague from the Conservative Party and myself, back some time ago, about that, and I was of the understanding that some of these problems might be ironed out on more of a permanent basis. Anyway, we'd just like an update on that.

I don't know, I guess the other thing we should try to get some kind of an update on is the crop insurance. Are there going to be any other commodities added to what's covered by crop insurance now? We'd just like a general update on that.

I thought I had a lot of questions and I run down here and now I'm out of questions at the moment, but I'm sure I'll have more whenever we come back.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Cleary, Mrs Fawcett. Members of the committee, with the concurrence of the minister, who still has 30 minutes of time for his rebuttal, there has been some agreement that, due to Mr Villeneuve's being called upon by the Speaker to represent our Legislature at a function next week, we could yield 20 minutes of his time now, since he'll be unable to participate next week. That has agreement.

The Chair is working with the understanding that the committee wishes to go with regular rotation by time allocation to each of the caucuses. With that in mind, with your indulgence, we'll begin, and finish at 6 today, with Mr Villeneuve, if that's agreeable. The time will be made up, both for the minister and to resume the proper rotation. If there's no objection then, Mr Villeneuve and the minister please proceed.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Mr Chairman, I certainly appreciate the indulgence of the committee and you, sir, and the minister.

We've had a lot of problems with Ontario Farm-Start, a program that was initiated some years ago by a previous government. It became very complicated to administer. The beginning farmers assistance program,

which has been in place for a number of years, probably somewhere about 10 years, appears to have worked reasonably well. Farm-Start is creating problems in that farmers have to reach a certain minimum income to qualify, and I believe the last window of opportunity has just gone by.

I've had a number of ag reps, and not only in my riding, but they have had some difficulty with the bureaucracy at 801 Bay Street in that the Farm-Start income picture from individual farmers is being gone through with a fine-tooth comb, mostly working against the beginning farmer.

Minister, you would know very well that a beginning farmer, if he has not netted \$5,500, which is not a lot of money—and we have bureaucrats going through their income and expense statements and disqualifying certain incomes, disqualifying certain expenditures, what have you.

I realize you have to answer to the auditor, I realize that you have a number of requirements but, in my opinion, there are certain instances where there is a bona fide farmer, he may have off-farm income, but he is within a whisker of qualifying and yet it's been difficult to deal with the bureaucrats. Could you comment on that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Okay, briefly, and then I'm going to get somebody who may be able to help us with the details.

My so-called senior parliamentary assistant from Huron—

**Mr Paul Klopp (Huron):** What do you mean "so-called"?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** He likes to be the senior PA—brought this to my attention some time ago. We did put in place some streamlining of the process for Farm-Start. We were attempting to make it less bureaucratic once you were on the program so that there wasn't this long-drawn-out process each year. Once you were on the program and there was some sense that you were a farmer, you would be okay. But Ken Knox has come to the front. He can talk to us a little bit about what that looks like, perhaps, in an attempt to streamline it, because it is something we were aware of and we tried to address it.

I was a little surprised when you raised it, because that issue hasn't been brought to me recently. It was earlier on in my term, so I kind of wonder if it's still a problem.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Just to qualify that, it became a problem when certain people were attempting to qualify at the last window of opportunity, which occurred—in April?

**Mr Ken Knox:** It would depend on their fiscal year, Noble, and when—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, I must interrupt. Mr Knox,

please introduce yourself fully for the benefit of the committee and for Hansard.

**Mr Knox:** Ken Knox, assistant deputy minister.

The program that, as the minister was talking about, is streamlining, we have made a lot of attempts to try and ensure that the hurdles the young farmers have had to go through, once they've demonstrated that they're good at bookkeeping and they're forthrightly interested in proceeding as a business—I think a lot of those have been eliminated. A lot of those concerns were at the local level where farmers had to go in and meet with their ag office staff, and there was felt to be a fair bit of bureaucracy at that end.

The aspect you raise—and if there are specific issues, I'll be glad to look into those and try and determine what the concern is on the eligibility—the bureaucracy, as it were, the staff that review these and ensure they live up to the instructions of the order in council, and that's where the minimum income is—I know that we have had some discussions, some that I've been involved in, where we've taken a look at some value added aspects where we could be more lenient, because it was obvious that the young farmer was making a bona fide attempt at making a go at farming, and we've been able to look at some of those value added things.

So within the order in council—obviously we have to live within that, but if there is flexibility—we'd be glad to look at any of the specific issues to try and iron out any problems.

**Mr Villeneuve:** I'll cite you a couple of examples that I had to live with. The second one that I will speak of I'm not sure if it has been resolved, but the first one was, the farmer wound up overwintering his neighbour's cattle because he had room and he had feed, and when he reported his income from that, custom-feeding became acceptable but simply feeding out cattle for his neighbour was not.

We established that indeed he was custom-feeding, ie, comparable to a feed lot where custom-feeding is accepted, but just feeding them out on a so-much-a-month basis, the bureaucracy was saying, "You're not taking a risk." That becomes a pretty fine line. The man needed income, had room in the barn, had feed in storage. Would it not make sense to do it? It's just that it was a misnomer. We managed to get accepted the fact that he was custom-feeding as opposed to whatever.

1740

The other one was a matter of the inventory of livestock purchased through the year. This young farmer purchased some brood cows that were not in very good shape. He did not pay a great deal of money for them but did feed them out, and came the end of his fiscal year, in his opinion and in his agricultural representative's opinion, the cattle had more than doubled in value.

The bureaucracy at the other end said: "Hey, you paid

\$500 for these cows. They're \$500 cows." The reality is, the man fed them, increased their value, brought them close to calving, and there was a dispute there. I say at that point in time, and I don't know how tough the auditor is on you, but give the farmer a chance. He's trying. That was my plea.

**Mr Knox:** And was that one resolved?

**Mr Villeneuve:** I don't know.

**Mr Knox:** I'll be glad to look into that.

**Mr Villeneuve:** I understand that this farmer was at his last window of opportunity and was thinking very seriously of going through the appeal process. I don't know if he did or not. I lost track of him.

**Mr Knox:** That's right, there is the appeal process, but if we can get these things resolved and if it's a matter of interpretation of those kinds of fine lines, then obviously if the farmer did a good job, the local staff should be able to determine that.

**Mr Villeneuve:** It's when the local Agriculture and Food officials in the ag rep's office come to you and say, "Look, I've got a problem, I've attempted everything," you feel bad about it, because indeed they are as close as anyone to the scene. I would like that their recommendations be taken sometimes.

**Mr Knox:** We'll take it into account. I can talk to you about the individual case and bring you a progress report on that.

**The Chair:** Actually, in fairness, I'm yielding this time to Mr Villeneuve. I'm sorry to do that, Mr Murdoch. The minister has logged several of your questions and I thought in your presence you may have wanted to engage him in that dialogue.

**Mr Villeneuve:** I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** I don't mean to be rude to Mr Murdoch, but I'm trying to be helpful as your Chair. You can change that if you wish. Please proceed.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** There are a few points that Mr Villeneuve raised that were not necessarily raised by the others in their questions. If I may, I will make some attempt to answer those.

One was on the commodity corporations in terms of how we're doing this year. Last year, in 1992, when we were very late in getting it running, there were 300 applications and about \$16 million in loans. So far in 1993, there have been 425 applicants and about \$30 million has gone out in loans. The expectation is that we could go with 600 applicants, which could increase it by another maybe \$10 million, \$15 million or \$20 million, as an estimate. So it is still a successful program.

I would add that the numbers are not necessarily as high as we had expected, and this is my own personal view. I think part of it is the fact that this program is doing something that we thought it might, that is, it



leverages some of the other lending institutions into becoming competitive for farmers so that we're not doing this ourselves.

The government is not in the business, but we are providing enough competition for some of the other lenders that are now giving farmers rates that are similar to what they're getting out of this program. Anyway, it's still a success I think in the fact that \$30 million has gone out to over 425 applicants.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Could you possibly just clarify? A lot of people are saying, "Why only one bank involved?"

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** When we set this up, we basically tendered the process out and then we kind of negotiated to get the best rate. It's easier for us, when we're setting up a program, to deal with one institution than it is with several. We're doing the same thing with the rural loan pool. Again, we were looking for one institution that would deliver it at a good rate and we were looking at prime, trying to get something that is low as possible. It's easier for us to deal with one than to try to deal with all the banks and all the credit unions, and so on. It's basically in order to get the better rate.

**Mr Villeneuve:** The problem is that if I'm not dealing with that particular bank, I have to pretty well take all of my business to this one designated bank. It makes it a little awkward for some people.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The corporation, in our view, is able to handle the paperwork in order to accommodate that so that that person does not have to, you know, run to another town to look for a bank of that kind. They can deal with the corporation. I understand the impediment, but it isn't really as much of an impediment as even I thought it was initially because the corporation is able to process the paper and deal with it.

Another issue that you raised, I think alone, was the tobacco adjustment exit program. What's happening there is that \$32 million, I believe, is the number that was committed from the province and the federal government. The federal government of course is looking at ways of restraining its budget as well and announced a 10% cut to a number of programs.

We weren't necessarily picking on tobacco here, but we realize that this year and last year the industry itself was not doing too badly. They were holding their own and would be able to provide themselves with sales in the export market. We did not think, in our consultations with the farmers and the tobacco board, that they were desperately in need of that money this year.

They wanted some guarantee there would be some money there in the future if there were more taxes coming or the industry was under more pressure, so we maintained the program. We just downsized the amount

of money, and significantly this year, but we've kept some money in there for this year and future years. So we haven't just completely dismantled the program. It will be there, in our view, if they need it.

**Mr Villeneuve:** At a reducing rate.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, and it's a program where if something hits, there's a disaster, hopefully both governments could move in and boost it up. So it's an existing program that we'll keep, but just at a reduced rate. We're also putting most of that money into looking at alternatives to tobacco and trying to put our efforts in there as opposed to simply just in export assistance or the exit part of it.

I think also you mentioned Bills 63, 64 and 65 and AgriCorp. The status of AgriCorp is that we intend to have that passed. Well, most of my bills I would like passed this session, including stable funding. AgriCorp is on my list that I make, it's on a non-controversial list for fast passage, and if we could find some time in the House to do that, we certainly would like to see it passed. It's our intent to do that. I think maybe if all of us talked to our House leaders about things like AgriCorp, we could get it through. We certainly would like to see it passed.

I would quickly add that the AgriCorp relocation which was slated for Chatham—those people will now, we believe, be housed in Guelph. So any of the jobs, the people will be now in Guelph which—well, that's a matter of fact.

You had some other ones on here?

**Mr Villeneuve:** Yes, I'll just touch this one here. I don't know if your ministry has any available emergency funding, but with the landslide that we've had just north of my riding, which will be affecting quite a number of dairy farmers, what would be the mechanism here? I know they met yesterday and they were meeting again today. There are eight ministries involved and no one wants to take the lead. It's a hot potato right now. Certainly, providing potable water for dairy farms is of utmost importance.

1750

**Ms Rita Burak:** In most cases like this it's the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that should take the lead, because it has, as you would know, the enabling legislation that might come into play. I don't know that they've made a determination that this is an instance where they could bring that matching funding legislation into play, but under normal circumstances they would take the lead and other ministries would be involved. But we would certainly be following up on this and do what we can to assist the farmers who may be affected. But they would normally be in the lead position.

**Mr Villeneuve:** But we have the high profile of Agriculture and Food in all of these counties and an Ag rep in all instances who knows and is very knowledgeable

able of the problem. It's a hands-on deal. Municipal Affairs tends to be more remote, and you may have to provide some guidance, some assistance. It's nice to say enabling legislation and all the rest of it, but when you don't have any water for your livestock and you're in the milk production business, it doesn't much matter. You shouldn't shoot the messenger, but the first person you would go to is your Ag rep.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We hear what you're saying. In fact, we happen to believe that the Ag offices would make excellent information offices for the province of Ontario in terms of being able to get information out to other clients in rural Ontario. When we talk about rural community development, we're certainly aware that we have facilities. I'll maybe skip on to the question that was raised by Mr Cleary, I believe, in terms of the Ag offices in the future. Obviously, everyone's under pressure, every ministry, despite the fact that Agriculture and Food is very important. I think all of us, certainly, in this room recognize that.

We're looking at other things that can be done. There's a committee of deputies that is looking in terms of delivery of government services and how the agricultural offices could be an important component of that, to maintain them. Otherwise, there obviously is pressure in terms of combining some of the offices. We in fact are looking at that. We're trying to get to the point initially, though, where there's sort of one in each county or each region. But there are going to be additional pressures as to whether or not we maintain, as they currently exist, an office in every county. It may be maintained and it may be looked at, but when you're looking at savings, you obviously look at all of those things. But I certainly accept the point that farmers come to the Ag office. Whether it's within the jurisdiction of our ministry or not, they're certainly going to come there.

One of the things I've been working hard at on the community action, which was announced not by ourselves but by Municipal Affairs and by Ms Lankin, is that all ministries in rural Ontario will be able to respond to that program, so that if a group goes into an Ag office, they would be able to answer questions about that program. So we certainly are aware of the need for us to be able to respond on other issues.

Notwithstanding that fact, the deputy has said that other ministries will probably have the lead in terms of getting support and funding.

**Mr Villeneuve:** In Dundela and Dundas county we have some apple producers, and we have apple producers spread out throughout the province of Ontario. My colleague from the official opposition touched on it, but apple producers have been hit, particularly in certain areas, very, very hard. I understand that controlled-atmosphere apples wound up in the juicer and not even paying for the cost of storage, let alone the cost of

production. How soon are we including apples under crop insurance? How close are we?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Apples do have a crop insurance plan. I believe it's not one that's not highly subscribed to, though—

**Mr Villeneuve:** That's what I mean.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** —that a number of the producers do not participate. It's perceived as being expensive, and that's especially true in the tender fruit industry. But certainly I'm aware, in the Collingwood area—in Mr Murdoch's area, a number of farmers came to see me, and they do not have crop insurance because they generally have not been victimized by weather; they've always had good seasons. The other thing is it's fairly expensive, in their view, and they haven't bought crop insurance.

I don't know what the answer is. You can't necessarily make insurance more affordable when it's based on premiums and payouts and has to be actuarially sound, but I'm certainly aware of the problem—

**Mr Villeneuve:** Tripartite.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** And tripartite—sorry?

**Mr Murdoch:** What about the money that's in there from the province?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The money?

**Mr Murdoch:** That they put in.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm going to ask Mr Bob Séguin, who has been talking to the producers and looking at the fund and the payout and what we're going to do with the money in there, to respond. I think he's got some good things to say.

**Mr Bob Séguin:** Bob Séguin with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, ADM for policy. Answering Mr Villeneuve's question on the browning issue that I believe Mrs Fawcett raised as well, we are working with the commission and looking at this issue—what's causing the browning problem and having fresh apples turn into juice apples—and looking at options that could help address it in future years.

The commission's well aware that it's been some dichotomies within its own organization that haven't enabled it to make use of the Crop Insurance Commission of Ontario, and likely they'll be approaching it again to see what coverage can be expanded in the future.

On tripartite stabilization, we have been in discussion with both the federal government, other provinces and the Ontario Apple Marketing Commission. The program ends June 30 of this year. We usually extend it because of disagreements among provinces about the length of term. We have been looking at a regional plan, much like the market revenue plan for crops, and that seems to have agreement among the other provinces and the other producers.

Our intention is to wind up the tripartite plan this year, pay out most of the funds according to a formula this year. There's a surplus in the fund this year in Ontario. They would get that surplus, or most of it. A small portion would roll over to a new plan that would start a day later. We effectively end one plan June 30 and start a regionalized plan with a new formula July 1. I'll offer the new plan to producers.

So they get in their program participation and either roll into a new plan or step aside the plan altogether.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Covering this year's crop, Mr Séguin?

**Mr Séguin:** Covering this year's crop.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Good.

**Mr Séguin:** So there'll be substantial amounts of money going to producers this fiscal year covering the 1992 crop that'll be needed for the crop problems they face this year.

**Mr Murdoch:** This was money they put in, isn't it?

**Mr Séguin:** Our moneys, the federal moneys and producer moneys.

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes, and the producers in Ontario who just wanted, hopefully, some of their money back?

**Mr Séguin:** And they will be getting it back.

**Mr Murdoch:** Okay, that's fine.

**Mr Klopp:** What a great government, huh?

**Mr Villeneuve:** That's what the Lieutenant Governor said.

**The Chair:** Mr Villeneuve, have you completed your questions?

**Mr Villeneuve:** Yes. I really appreciate the indulgence of the committee and I'm certain the minister will be providing me some answers to the broader questions that were asked and I look forward to those in due course.

**The Chair:** Any written responses to the questions are always very much appreciated by the committee and, in and of themselves, help for a more complete discussion when estimates reconvene on Tuesday, June 29. Final question, Mr Murdoch?

**Mr Murdoch:** I was just going to say maybe, then, to Elmer—this is on the stable funding. John brought it up, the registration forms. People do ask me about what they're going to be like. I know we have to register now

to get our tax rebate back. Are they going to be a long, complicated form, or is this going to be something simple?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Just very quickly, I've seen some drafts. We were going to take them out and sort of do a test with farm groups to say, "Is this all right?" so that we don't make any blunders here and put something on that they would object to—and to make it simple, too. I'm very much in favour of very straightforward, one-page forms like we had on one farm interest assistance program that I was responsible for putting out. One of my first things was that it was very simple and straightforward. We hope to get something similar to that. So it'll be tested. We're not going to be going after information that's sensitive or delicate. Some people are afraid on that count and we're going to be very careful and not do that.

**Mr Villeneuve:** As a supplementary, can this be changed by regulation? It could be very simple going in; it could get very complicated a year or two down the road.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The application form?

**Mr Villeneuve:** The registration form.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The registration form would be noted in the regulations.

**Ms Burak:** Prescribed in the regs.

**The Chair:** Prescribed in the regs, we're advised by the deputy minister. Mr North, briefly.

**Mr Peter North (Elgin):** Just a quick question for the deputy. Who did you say generally took the lead on situations such as Mr Villeneuve has suggested?

**Ms Burak:** In situations where there is weather damage that impacts a community, it's normally the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that would take the lead to work with the local municipality to see what could be done by way of assistance. There is enabling legislation which belongs to that ministry that can be kicked in under certain circumstances. So that's why I made the reference to Municipal Affairs.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We have completed just under two hours of our estimates and this committee stands adjourned, to reconvene on Tuesday, June 29, immediately following routine proceedings.

The committee adjourned at 1801.



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**Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

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**\*Lessard, Wayne** (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Cleary, John C. (Cornwall L) for Mr Elston

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L) for Mr Mahoney

Klopp, Paul (Huron ND) for Mr Jamison

North, Peter (Elgin ND) for Mr Wiseman

Villeneuve, Noble (S-D-G & East Grenville/S-D-G & Grenville-Est PC) for Mr Arnott

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Murdoch, Bill (Grey PC)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia





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ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 29 June 1993**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 29 juin 1993**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Ministry of Agriculture  
and Food**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

**Ministère de l'Agriculture et  
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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 29 June 1993

The committee met at 1528 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** The committee will continue with the estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. When we completed last week, we had stood down the 30 minutes of response time allocated to the minister. He has indicated that he is prepared to respond to the first round of questions that were raised in the opening statements, and then it would be my intention, as the Chair, to begin the rotation with the official opposition, then the government party, for 20 minutes each, and then back to the Liberals. Then we'll be on regular rotation since, as a courtesy, the committee allowed the third party to do its questioning.

With that understanding in mind, Minister, welcome. Please proceed.

**Hon Elmer Buchanan (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Thank you, Mr Chairman. What I thought we might do with the time that you've allocated is to run through responses to some of the questions that were put last week. Noble Villeneuve is not with us, so I thought maybe I'd try and deal quickly with his questions and then deal with some of the other members' questions, as well, who are here.

There are a number of questions, I think. There were 40 or 50 questions put, so I'll try and deal with them briefly. We've got staff here. In some cases you may want to ask a follow-up, and if you want to follow up we'll get staff certainly involved.

One of the first questions Mr Villeneuve asked was whether or not I was planning to meet with the groups from the Centralia and New Liskeard agricultural colleges. We have established a formal meeting with the coalition from New Liskeard, which is going to take place on July 12. Staff met with the coalition group last night. There was a previous meeting on May 14, in fact, to talk to that group.

Staff at this point have met with the Friends of Centralia back on May 20, and my parliamentary assistant from Huron has met with a couple of different groups from Centralia that have some proposals they would like us to consider. It is our expectation that I will be meeting with some of the people, along with my PA, and talking to the people from Centralia when they have some ideas. However, up to now the member for Huron has been the lead in terms of consulting and meeting with the group from Centralia, since that particular college is in his riding.

I would like to reiterate again, though, one more time for everyone, it's not our intention to reverse the

decision on Centralia and New Liskeard, but we are willing to sit down and discuss the options for maintaining the research aspect of both of those colleges. Quite frankly, the letters and the comments we've received from both areas have tended to focus on the research. There aren't that many people who are still calling for the colleges themselves to remain open.

I think that's a positive approach from the people who live in those areas. We certainly recognize the significant economic impact that the closure will have, but we do want to maintain the agricultural component. We're concerned about the vet lab services at Centralia, and of course there are lots of questions around that move, which at this point in time is projected to go to Ridgetown. I know there have been some questions in the House and other places about that, but that at the moment is the plan.

Noble also asked about the litigation. I think you all know that there is a class-action lawsuit being proposed. The motion for that was heard on June 28, which I guess was yesterday, and it's expected to be concluded on Friday. The Attorney General is representing the province before the courts on that issue. I don't really want to comment too much more on that at this point in time, but we expect that to be wrapped up and dealt with by Friday.

The next question Mr Villeneuve put—and this, I know, is of interest to the member for Cornwall as well—is the question of ethanol and what support the ministry will give to that particular industry.

A few brief comments: First of all, we're very pleased that United Co-operatives of Ontario Petroleum is expanding the distribution of ethanol-blended fuels into eastern Ontario, and there are a number of openings in various service stations that are happening over the next few weeks. I think that is a positive response.

I am aware that there are a number of people interested in investing in ethanol plants. At this point in time there is no money. I think that was a question that the member for Cornwall put, which I'll get to maybe in more detail in a minute. There's no immediate pot of money that's set aside for ethanol; however, what the industry has asked of myself is some assurance that the current exemption for provincial sales tax and federal excise tax could be put in place so it will be lasting, so it's not something that's here today and may disappear tomorrow.

If the people are going to invest money in ethanol they don't want to have that exemption lifted, and I want to assure people that we are discussing that with



treasury fairly aggressively and we're also discussing it with the federal government to see if we can't put something on paper that will have some staying power so that people who wish to invest will know that that exemption will be maintained. I believe they're asking for some 10 years' exemption. I assume that there's some negotiability in that. But I continue to believe in the ethanol industry and we'll be doing what we can, given our fiscal situation.

I'm certainly aware that the Seaway Valley group is still interested and has done a study, and I want to get on with that and do what we can, but I think at this point in time it's the continued exemption that we're focusing on. If we can deal with that issue, I think we can get to the next stage, which may be the construction of a facility.

The next question that Mr Villeneuve had was on the farm tax rebate and what our thoughts were on that. I certainly do not have to be told of the importance of that farm tax rebate program, how important it is to the farming community. It was under some pressure, again, as everyone realizes in the province. We were able to maintain it as a frozen level, which is perhaps not the most desired, but at least it's better than some of the other ideas that people were putting to me.

We hope that the Fair Tax Commission can come up with some ideas which will solve that problem. I certainly accept the fact that this is not a fair tax and that people are getting their money returned; I do not dispute that argument. However, we have to live with the system as it is. That particular program is in my budget and we have to try and maintain it and do what we can. The issue is under review and certainly being studied. We recognize the fact that if it's frozen indefinitely it will cause problems in future years, and we certainly have to address that issue.

The next question that Mr Villeneuve had was on agricultural easements. Everyone knows that we are studying it in the Niagara region. I have supported the concept; the Premier has supported the concept. There's a pricetag of some \$20 million over five years. That would only protect about 2,000 acres in tender fruit land, which could be done as a pilot project, and I'd be interested in hearing what other people have to say on that. Personally, I've supported it and the Premier is on record, as well, as supporting it. There are some people in the rural communities and in the planning departments around the province who think that the program is not necessarily the best one for Niagara, but I continue to believe that it's a start, it's a beginning, and something that I'm prepared to pursue, knowing that we're in tough times. I'm probably not going to get the money this year, although I'm still working on it.

Another question that was put was the details on our position on NAFTA. I don't want to take a lot of time on NAFTA. I could talk for the rest of the afternoon on

it, but I won't. I don't think I have to reiterate the government's position on NAFTA. I accept the fact that the agriculture and food industry in the province is somewhat split on the issue. I certainly recognize that some producers believe that there are some benefits to be had. I also am aware, especially in the horticultural sector, there are some real dangers in pursuing the NAFTA as it's currently written and apparently going to be implemented, given that Mexico and the US may in fact approve it. I continue to believe that we should pursue trade liberalization through the GATT, although it's not perfect either, but it would be better to have a more diverse trade policy.

Mr Villeneuve also asked a question on the landslide issue and what our role was in that. I think that question was covered more or less last week.

The question of community economic development was also raised. The government of Ontario is quite interested in pursuing community economic development. As the Minister of Agriculture and Food with a keen interest in rural Ontario, I believe that we need to do a lot more for rural Ontario, and community economic development is one of the routes that we should go to that end. There's been a new program announced in the budget—it was one of the few new programs—the Jobs Ontario Community Action, which is a \$300-million, three-year program. Some of that money is going to be targeted for rural Ontario and I look forward to working with different groups in rural Ontario and with people from other parties, members from other ridings, as to how we can get this program up and running, make people aware of it so they can tap into it. It's not a big amount of money.

It's not intended, I might add, as a grant program. I think that the days of the grant programs are numbered, quite frankly, from all levels of government. We need to look at loan programs. We need to look at programs that will help communities to help themselves.

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To that end, the Minister of Municipal Affairs a couple of weeks ago introduced a bill into the House, which hopefully will be passed in the fall, that will set up the community bond corporation and also a share capital corporation which will allow people in communities to put money into a fund that will be reinvested for community development projects and also for private small business. I think many of us have heard from small businesses that are having trouble accessing credit. We believe that these two funds are going to provide some of that credit for small businesses in rural Ontario and allow us to create more jobs in rural Ontario and ultimately to help farmers in that whole rural component of our society.

Another question that Mr Villeneuve asked was around the stockyards. I think that was raised by a number of the members on the committee. His question

dealt with eastern Ontario farmers who, I am certainly aware, are going to be more negatively impacted, perhaps, than other farmers in other parts of the province. We believe that there are sufficient community sales barns in eastern Ontario to deal with the livestock, although the perception is that they've traditionally used the stockyards in Toronto more than other producers across the province.

There is a trust fund that will be set up which will be built up over years from the lease of properties at the site. We will sit down and discuss with producer groups and farm organizations how that money should be used and invested. One of the things I would like to see—if there's a need for more sales barns capacity in eastern Ontario or elsewhere, I would expect that some of that money could be allocated for that project.

I might comment further, as it's somewhat of a current item, that there was a newspaper article, I believe it was this week. It had my picture on the article. That was the only part of that article that I had anything to do with. It was not quoting me; it was not quoting a ministry source. It talked about new stockyards north of Toronto. I don't know where the story came from. The sheep producers were quoted, in talking to UCO, one of the commission firms from the stockyards, about the idea or the concept of having a new stockyard. They talked about having a board to run it which sounds an awful lot like the current stockyards board.

I want, before anyone asks, to tell you that is not in our plans. I am interested in closing the book out on the government of Ontario running stockyards. We are allowing the private entrepreneurs to take that business over. If there are people who are interested in investing in another yard north of Toronto, that's great. It would help the sheep producers, I recognize, who have been impacted more than others. But I want to let you know that is not something we did any press release on or made any promises around.

The next series of questions on my pile is from the member for Grey, Mr Murdoch. He asked about the severance situation in Grey county and how it compared with other counties. In May 1991—it's a significant date, I know, in the mind of the member for Grey—the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment came in and took over some of the aspects of planning and applications for severances in Grey county. At that point, there had been an increase of 650% in the number of applications between 1986 and 1989. The interministry team has been working there in order to develop a more effective review process.

The number of applications for severances in 1992 was down at 249. The recession obviously has some impact on that, but that situation we believe is quite comparable with what's happening in other counties.

Of the 51 districts and municipalities that we monitor,

there were eight counties, including Grey, which had more than 200 applications in 1992. Grey was in a grouping of eight counties or districts that had more than 200 applications. They're not alone, but they are at the upper end of the scale in terms of applications.

We are continuing to monitor the situation in Grey. I happen to believe, in talking to the member and others, that things are under control. I believe there are certainly some glitches there and some concerns, but things are working much better than they were.

Neil Smith, who is with us today from land use planning, I think could probably talk a little bit more—I know the member for Grey has a very serious interest in this—in terms of the technical aspects of planning in Grey and how it compares with other counties.

**The Chair:** Mr Smith, I believe you've been introduced, so please proceed.

**Mr Neil Smith:** In terms of the official plan, as you know, part of the problem we've had in Grey county is that the official plan, in all fairness, didn't do a very good job of defining which lands were good agricultural lands and which lands were not. We're pleased that the county has now hired a consultant and is working on a new official plan. We've been working with them, and hopefully that's one part of the problem we can deal with. There are certainly lots of areas in Grey county that there really isn't a need to protect for long-term agricultural use.

**The Chair:** Are you offering a supplementary?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, I am.

**The Chair:** The minister's invited you to cross-examine Mr Smith.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey):** It's good to hear that you're working and that there are some areas where agriculture doesn't need protecting. We've been trying to get that message across for quite a while and I'm glad to see it's finally sunk in.

Do you want to go on the second one? It's the same thing, Elmer. I'm sure he's in this—

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The second one?

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Why don't you just reiterate your question so that he can answer it directly?

**Mr Murdoch:** As you know, Sydenham is trying to develop a zoning bylaw and it's come up with the 50 acres and your ministry has objected to this now and may take it to the OMB. Is there anything we can work out on this? Because 50 acres can be farmed, and then again it can't be. It's pretty hard to define what acreage you should have for farming. They're very concerned in Sydenham. There's also one in Bruce county that's being objected to at the same time. We've been asked for a long time to try to get zoning in and now they're trying to work something out and everybody seems



quite happy with it, but lo and behold, Ag and Food comes along and says, "No, no, no, now; we've got to watch this 50-acre thing." Can you help us there or what?

**Mr Smith:** Yes. I think the two townships you're referring to are Sydenham and Keppel.

**Mr Murdoch:** No, Keppel's in Grey, too. I haven't heard of Keppel, but there is one in Bruce too that's been objected to, but I can't remember which one it was. But Sydenham's my home township.

**Mr Smith:** In planning for the various zones in a municipal official plan, they establish a minimum lot size. In the case of residential lots in the countryside, it's often based on a minimum lot size to put in a septic tank; you need a certain area.

From an agricultural point of view, according to the Food Land Guidelines, which is the provincial policy, as well as the Grey-Owen Sound official plan, it talks about a lot size being large enough for flexibility and viability of future farm operations.

What we do when we look at those kinds of policies, which are quite general, and try to apply them to a local situation is that we look at, what is the typical situation there now? If you're in a Holland Marsh situation, a typical size may be 15 to 20 acres. We found in those townships that the parcels were larger than 100 acres on average. We felt that 50 therefore wasn't a reasonable size.

I would add that also in Grey county there's an OMB hearing going on in Euphrasia township. Actually, the hearing was yesterday, and it was the same issue. The county and the township had proposed 100 acres, on average, and we felt that 50 therefore wasn't a reasonable size.

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I would add that also in Grey county there's an OMB hearing going on in Euphrasia township. Actually, the hearing was yesterday and it was the same issue. The county and the township had proposed 100 acres and we as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food supported them at the hearing.

I thought the two farmers who testified in support of 100 acres probably said it best when they said, "In Grey county, it's such that if you go to 50 acres"—and you'd probably know a lot better than I would, being from Sydenham township—"probably only about 30 of those are tillable and therefore when you get down to 30 acres you're really reducing the capability of that parcel to be farmed for large machinery and other things."

Anyway, to conclude, in terms of whether we can work anything out, the township and the county have been in contact with us and we plan to meet and hopefully resolve this before it goes to the Ontario Municipal Board.

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes, because that's going to cost both

a lot of money, and there's no need for it. As long as you're working on it, I'll leave it in your capable hands.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Mr Murdoch also had a question on conservation authorities and the overlap. I don't think we need to discuss the problem further. I would add that the Ministry of Natural Resources has been working with the Ministry of Environment and Energy and ourselves to look at the overlap and work with the conservation authorities of Ontario to look at how we could reduce overlap, what their functions should be in the future, and there are ongoing discussions. We certainly accept and I certainly accept the fact there is a significant overlap that needs to be addressed and we will attempt to do that.

Bill 162 works against the diversification of agriculture. Mr Murdoch asked what we planned to do about it. We have been working on a bill which would be a livestock industry diversification act. We believe this will be a companion piece to Bill 162, the Game and Fish Amendment Act. We would expect if Bill 162 is to be approved that we will be looking at bringing that bill forward to be passed as well, which will deal with the diversification which we accept as viable and in some cases maybe more viable than some of the traditional agricultural operations. We support that and see that this should be part of 162 if it comes forward.

The final question from Mr Murdoch dealt with the Sewell report. At this point in time, neither the ministry nor the government has had a chance to respond to all of the recommendations. They are very numerous.

I guess my very early assessment is that if counties, municipalities, have good planning people and mechanisms in place, if we were to adopt all the recommendations and go forward and with what's in there, a lot of the decisions would be made at the local level. If you don't have that planning department and so on, which is the case in many of the rural municipalities, then the province would still be very much involved.

We're going to have to take a look at what the recommendations are and how they fit and how they balance across the province before I sort of agree or disagree totally with Sewell. I think there were some things in the report that we certainly endorse and other things that we would have to take a second look at before I come out and say, "Yes, this is a great idea."

He did say, I would add, that class 1, 2 and 3 land should be protected for agriculture only, with the only exemptions being given to villages, towns and cities which were adjacent and which needed that land, absolutely had to have that land in order to expand, with no alternatives for expansion.

I certainly would support the preservation of class 1, 2 and 3 land. Then we need to get on with how we allow development in other parts of rural Ontario and other kinds of land that would speed it up, which I think



is what Sewell was trying to do.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** I don't understand the procedure here. I have some questions on that specific point.

**The Chair:** When the procedure was announced, we indicated this is the minister's time. The minister is responding to questions that were raised. Should the minister feel obliged to yield any of that time, he can do so. But when the minister has completed his—

**Mr Wiseman:** I got you.

**The Chair:** You got it? Great. Please proceed, Minister.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Next in my pile here are the questions from the member for Northumberland, Ms Fawcett. The first question was on the budget reduction of OMAF. Her question was, why was that larger than other ministries? I have a chart which shows the expenditure control plan reductions across different ministries.

If we look at the budget projections for 1993-94 and then look at the reductions, the lowest percentage cutback on the expenditure control plan was Consumer and Commercial Relations, which was 1.5%, the reason for that being that it tends to be a regulatory ministry that regulates elevators and a number of other things. It's very difficult to cut back on mandated inspections and the things they do. They tend to be a regulatory ministry.

The next up the line was the Solicitor General and Correctional Services, a 2% cut. They run the prisons and the police. Again, there's a limit to how much you can cut back in that area.

Community and Social Services was 3.4%. Part of the reason there is because social assistance was hard to cut back significantly. Finance was at 4.6%. I can't give you an answer why they got off so lightly. I'll move on to Health with a cut of 5.8%, again an attempt to try to maintain health services. Education and Training was at 6.2%, the AG's office was at 7.4% and then we were next at 8.9%.

Then you move up the scale, up as high as 15% for Management Board. Intergovernmental Affairs was 14.9%. The Labour ministry took 14.2%, Environment and Energy 13.9% and Natural Resources 13.2%.

If you look at it from what the budget projections were for 1993-94 and what the cut was, at 8.9% we didn't take any more than some of these other ministries which would be similar in nature. I do agree that it was significant. I'll try to defend myself on the farm tax rebate issue, which is the question of this. If you take that out, obviously it increases the percentage. I know that's a numbers game and I understand the principle, but that program is part of my ministry and we have to take cuts on a percentage basis. It comes out and I have to live with that.

I think in terms of percentages we didn't fare as

badly perhaps as some people are concerned. Obviously, I was concerned with the size of it, but—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, sure. Okay. The next question was on the farm tax rebate program. The focus of this question was to eliminate the uncertainty. Again, I would suggest that I'm hoping the Fair Tax Commission answers. Again, I'm aware of the importance of the program. We are looking at alternatives to that and how it might be administered. I know there are lots of ideas about changing it.

**Mrs Joan M. Fawcett (Northumberland):** Any time lines as to when you might be looking at changes? Can we expect it in the next—

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We're sort of committed to the freezing for this year and next year. We hope to be able to have something in place then subsequently to replace or to change it so that we get out of this year-to-year thing. I understand in the farm community it's difficult not knowing what it is, because it's always mentioned as a potential cut. I recognize the need to do that.

The next question I had was whether the other colleges can handle the students. With the numbers we currently have, there is no problem in doing that. The New Liskeard program is going to carry on this year. The first-year people will go there. They will have to agree to the fact that they would go to another institution the following year. The biggest program at New Liskeard is the equine program. At the moment, the plan is to have that go to Kemptville, although I know there have been people asking questions about that.

The next question was regarding the consideration of correspondence courses. We have supported independent study programs out of the University of Guelph. I would add, though, that we are looking at moving them a little closer to user-pay so that the cost is reflected in the fees for them as opposed to a subsidy, which makes it easier to offer more if we recover the cost of running those. There may be some opportunity to expand those kinds of courses in the future, and I think the question is important in that context. It's something we should look at. We have to look at different ways of offering extension courses, and with the advent of computers and other things, it's much easier to do those kinds of courses and it's something we are interested in.

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The next question was on Sewell. I think I've touched on that. I won't repeat that.

The next question was on a review of the stable funding legislation being made mandatory. That would require changing the act as it's currently constituted one more time.

**Mrs Fawcett:** I think one word.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** One word: "may" to "shall"?

**Mrs Fawcett:** That it "may."

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I've said this before in terms of the existing bill, that if there's a need to review it, it would be my understanding that whoever the farm leaders are will be asking for that and that whoever the minister is would respond to that if there's a need for review. If it's not working, obviously it's in everyone's interest to review it and look at what other options should be.

The reason for three years is to give it a chance to work. Something like this you can't necessarily assess after one year and say, "It's a great program." We think three years will give it a fair chance. My option is to prefer to leave in the words "may review" it or "consider the review" as opposed to "shall review."

The environmental bill of rights, the impact on agriculture: We tried to facilitate as much input from the agriculture and food groups as possible. I remember that once it was announced that an environmental bill of rights was coming, one of the first things we did was convene a group of people on the agricultural side as an advisory group. We subsequently brought together a group of food industry people, again to act as an adviser, so they had input. Once the bill was first brought out, there was another group and it had feedback.

We do not think the impact is going to be that significant. The Farm Practices Protection Act certainly is going to remain in force and will be part of the loop before people would go to the bill of rights in terms of seeking any court action.

The other thing I would add is that the environmental bill of rights can only be used if the farmer is breaking an existing law. It's not that you don't like the farmer or you don't like the smell of their fields. You have to be doing something that's against the law before anybody can drag you into court. Early on, some farmers were concerned that the neighbours might be dragging them into court under this legislation, and that's not the way it works. They would have to be doing something that's clearly breaking some existing law before the bill of rights would cause any difficulty.

I think the work that's been done since this concept was announced just after we formed the government, the farm groups that have come together and worked on the environmental farm plans in a voluntary sense, is a very positive move. As far as I'm concerned, it demonstrates the fact that farmers are concerned with the environment, they're interested in doing something about it, they have a plan and they're doing it voluntarily. I think that augurs well, and I do not feel that the bill of rights is going to adversely affect them in the medium term.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**The Chair:** I note that the minister still has several additional replies. It's appreciated that he's come prepared to respond to those, but perhaps they can occur

in the process of the rotation. If that's the case, I'd like to move now into the regular rotation. We're going to try 20-minute segments, and we'll begin with the official opposition.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** One thing I touched on partially last time is the dairy inspectors. That issue continues to raise eyebrows and anger at the minister's decision to eliminate on-dairy inspectors.

Just this past weekend I was approached by a milk marketing board member. They tell me that not only was the Ontario Milk Marketing Board not consulted beforehand about this decision but also that it remains largely in the dark about how you intend to address any potential problems. I've asked the minister several times in the Legislature how many dairy inspectors will be eliminated while seeking assurance that Ontario's superior milk quality standards will not be jeopardized by the cutback.

I'm still not definitely sure and the residents who contact me are still not sure how many dairy inspectors are left. I guess I'll have to question you again, Minister. Exactly how many dairy inspectors are there now and how many do you intend to lay off? I hope the minister will be able to provide these two simple numbers. Did you want to answer that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Do you want me to?

**Mr Cleary:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I've tried it a couple of times. We have Merv Reynolds, who's manager of the raw milk quality resources and regulations branch. Since my last two answers didn't work, maybe I'll ask him to respond and you can go from there.

**Mr Merv Reynolds:** There are currently 11 dairy inspectors left with the raw milk quality program in the regs and resources branch. One individual is located in Thunder Bay, and he'll have the added responsibilities of dairy plant inspection and dairy plant audit. Of the remainder, all inspectors will have on-farm responsibilities. One will be located in North Bay, five in western Ontario and four in eastern Ontario.

There was a meeting held with the deputy minister, the chairman of the milk marketing board and other representatives shortly after the announcement, I guess to document the fact that there would be a plan forthcoming to the industry on how problems would be dealt with down the road. That plan has come into effect.

We met with two representatives of the milk marketing board on June 18, and John Karn, one of its managers, to give it our synopsis of what would happen in the future. They have taken that back to review with their board.

We've outlined a new set of priorities and protocols. The safety of the milk and dairy products will be the primary focus, which means the inhibitor follow-up testing program will remain our top priority.



Responding to the results of other quality tests performed at the Guelph laboratories will be guaranteed only to those producers who request assistance. Over the years, the producers have become familiar with corrective measures in terms of milk quality program. For example, if they get a high bacteria count, they know the sorts of things to look at on their own. We plan to use form letters to send to them to remind them of those things. In any event, if they have difficulty locating the source of their problems, they can always phone us and we will make a visit to the farm.

Bear in mind also that there are others available in the industry to assist producers. Thinking specifically of high somatic cell count problems, I saw ourselves as being only the catalyst; the people who are really responsible for helping producers are more in the line of veterinarians, equipment dealers, the Ontario Milk Marketing Board and udder health technicians, just to name a few.

**Mr Cleary:** Having known over a number of years some of the problems that can happen in the production of milk, I want to say that the minister had stated in the Legislature that "Milk quality remains a priority," and, "If there should be any problem, there are other inspectors who may be able to pick up the extra work." I must ask if anyone else other than a provincial government employee is legally able to implement the regulations of the Milk Act. As well, I am wondering the exact identity and expertise of these unnamed inspectors to whom the minister has previously alluded in the Legislature.

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**Mr Reynolds:** To answer that question, I don't see our requiring other inspectors to help us. Some of the things I've thought of are that producer numbers are declining. In the past, I think routine inspections of farms have been one of the priorities of the branch. Quality follow-ups were another thing. I think it will be up to our 11 individuals to continue this responsibility, and I don't really foresee at this point in time very much problem in doing that.

The number of quality problems that are evidenced by test results at the laboratory in Guelph is around perhaps 200 a month. Spread over the number of producers, it boils down to about 20 per 1,000 producers. If we have an inspector in an area to serve those 1,000 producers—and we're dealing with those who call to request assistance. Again, I don't think too many are going to call us to ask for help; I think they know enough about their own operations to be able to implement corrective measures on their own, or they may choose to phone a veterinarian or someone else to give them assistance.

As far as who is able to legally administer the act is concerned, regulation 761 under the act, we're the only ones who can do that.

The quality penalty program is in place to encourage producers to continue to produce high-quality milk, and I think they're very good at doing that.

**Mr Cleary:** Thank you. I'm not totally satisfied and I'm not sure I can explain it to the farmers who approach me, but anyway, I'll get on with something else.

Groundwater is another critical matter for farmers. I find it very interesting that industry is one of the biggest users of water, while among the smallest users are the farmers, but they are expected to preserve water quality and also to pay more than some of the city dwellers.

It is my understanding that various departments, although not necessarily in a coordinated effort, including the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ontario Water Well Association are each reviewing farmers' activities around water sources. I have to be frank about this. Farmers are as interested in and determined for the preservation and protection of water and its sources as well as anyone else, so my question is, would the minister clearly state his intentions for the regulation of recharged wells.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm going to ask Ken Knox, the assistant deputy minister, to have a go at this.

While he's thinking about what he's going to say, as I'm sure you are well aware, there was a joint survey done in terms of wells and the quality of wells in rural Ontario, particularly on farms, and there's a significant amount of contamination. That survey did not get widespread publicity, although there was some, certainly. We do not have the lead responsibility when it comes to water, but we obviously have some concerns and work with farmers and so on around water quality. That's what the land stewardship II program was partially about.

With those introductory remarks, I will let Ken Knox try to fill in the blanks.

**Mr Ken Knox:** There are ongoing discussions with the farm organizations. The environmental farm plan is an initiative that they've put forward, and one of the components of that is to ensure that farmers are doing what they can to provide that there isn't contamination of groundwater. So there's discussion that's happening there.

We are arranging a meeting with the well drillers' association to find out if we can work cooperatively to give counsel to farmers. One of the areas that's a big concern is old wells which are abandoned. They provide a good conduit of material that we might not want in the groundwater source down into the groundwater, so we're going to be encouraging farmers to do what they can to eliminate those old wells. There may be some capping procedures, and the well drillers' association is going to be working with us discussing with us and the



farm organizations to determine what steps might be done to encourage farmers to do that.

I'm not sure if there was additional information that might be required for that question, so I'd be glad to try and provide it.

**Mr Cleary:** There are incidents of different residents that I've met with where their farm is on a potential water supply for many towns. I guess what they're very discouraged about is at some of the meetings when decisions are being made, the Ministry of Agriculture doesn't have much say there, and sometimes there isn't even a representative at the meeting.

**Mr Knox:** This would be an area where there is an aquifer on a farm that is providing water or potentially providing water to—

**Mr Cleary:** Exactly.

**Mr Knox:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Food doesn't have a specific role in assisting municipalities to determine what their water source is and they may make arrangements with local farmers to provide water and there's negotiation. I understand there's one issue in eastern Ontario which has been going on for some time and the negotiations have been quite difficult, but there isn't a role for us as a ministry, from a regulatory standpoint, to be involved in assisting a farmer negotiate with a municipality for that water source.

I would suspect there have been some negotiating meetings go on where in fact we haven't been represented, but I know our field staff are quite interested and, to the extent that they can assist farmers in their own cultural practices, we have been picking up a more predominant role in that area.

**Mr Cleary:** Do I have more time?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** Mr Cleary, you have a minute and a half. One quick question.

**Mr Cleary:** One thing that I have to bring up: I guess the minister's well aware of Ben Berendsen. To briefly backtrack, a private company with a contract with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation buried a pile of used asphalt close to a water well which later became Mr Berendsen's farm. Tests show a number of contaminants in Mr Berendsen's water that are very seriously affecting his dairy herd and his milk production.

Some time ago the government promised to help Mr Berendsen if he could prove the water was contaminated, which I am told has been done. I am told that local health officials and the Ontario Milk Marketing Board have now even refused to accept his milk. I am told that. However, both provincial ministries of Environment and Ag and Food are refusing to admit that anything is wrong, and they are not honouring their past commitments, I am told. I have even heard that the dairy inspection branch had said that it does not matter if there are any chemicals in Mr Berendsen's milk,

because when mixed with other milk, it becomes diluted to the point that it's insignificant. This hardly seems an appropriate position. I am told this.

At this time I ask the minister to clearly put on the record his opinion on the contamination, whether the minister believes Mr Berendsen should receive assistance from the provincial government and exactly what action is being taken.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** First of all, just let me correct whoever told you that the dairy inspection branch talked about the dilution of any chemical. That is absolutely false. The dairy inspection branch and the milk marketing board obviously have been monitoring the situation very carefully and working as cooperatively and trying to be as helpful as possible, but they have not made any such comments. This is a delicate matter, Mr Chairman, as I'm sure you're aware, given the fact that the farm in question is in your county.

1620

The Ministry of Environment was supplying water because there were some problems with the water. They eventually decided that the tests that were done did not show any contamination and they decided to cut the water off. I was drawn into the picture and, primarily on humanitarian grounds, decided that we would put money in to supply water until such time as it could be proved or disproved that there was contamination and where it was coming from.

Once all the tests were in and so on, we came to the conclusion that we're not going to supply water any further and have advised Mr Berendsen of his legal opportunities and recourse in order to address the situation. At this point in time, I'm not sure whether he has chosen to do that or not. His milk is still being accepted, the last I heard, which was last week. Things are carrying on; I believe he's still getting water from off-site.

I would hope that the issue could be resolved; this has been around for some time. The concern about the asphalt, which everyone seems to agree is buried somewhere under his operation—and we have tried to be helpful and we've now given Mr Berendsen our best advice on what future action he could take.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you for your answer. It is a sensitive question and, being in the chair, I'm unable to ask questions at this time. The Liberal time has expired and now we move to the government caucus. Mr Bisson.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** A couple of questions. As you know, Mr Minister, on a number of occasions we've discussed some of the agricultural issues within my riding, I guess in fairly good detail, especially during our time together on the NAFTA committee, and I think you understand some of the unique problems in agriculture, especially in northern

Ontario, with regard to climate, proximity of markets etc.

The first question I would have is an old question around veterinary issues with regard to the communities of Matheson and Iroquois Falls. I guess the problem is basically this: The farming community around those two particular communities doesn't offer enough business for a vet to be able to operate a full-time business and make a livelihood out of just dealing with animals off the farm.

Conversely, the whole question of how much business is available with regard to people's pets is also not quite enough to be able to keep them going. So they formed, after the last vet left—I guess some two or three years ago the vet who was up in the area left the community. He was operating a practice out of actually the corrections institution in Monteith. A committee was put together. Oh, God, a lot of work was put into trying to find a vet to come into our community to be able to service the agricultural community of Monteith, Iroquois Falls and Matheson.

Finally they got somebody. A very fine gentleman, and his wife, moved into our community and started to provide that service but he has difficulty trying to make ends meet. He had to buy equipment in order to staff that particular office because most of the equipment that was in there was taken away when the other vet left. Basically the new vet who's coming in has got very high overhead with regard to the equipment that he has. He doesn't have quite enough business in order to make the kind of livelihood that he expects to make as a vet.

I guess the question I would have is that we're sort of at our wits' end. We've tried to deal with different ministries, including yours, in order to see if there's something that we can do to help offset the cost of those materials or try to offset in some way the overall costs of that office. I am just wondering if you can sort of help us out with that in any kind of way.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, there is a designated area, that program, which provides a subsidy; the actual amount I don't have on the tip of my tongue, but we do provide some grant money to try and assist those areas to maintain veterinary services in an area where normally they wouldn't because of the insufficient business.

But we do provide a program to assist vets to set up in areas, particularly in northern communities, and I'm looking to see who got the short straw. Ken Knox, ADM, will—

**Mr Bisson:** Ken, you keep on getting picked.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** While Ken is coming up, we tend to be looking at supporting the livestock-agricultural side of things as opposed to the Fluffy and Spot business, which is a different ministry.

**Mr Bisson:** You'll get a lot of letters on that one.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** With that lead-in, Mr Knox—

**Mr Knox:** Thanks, Mr Minister. We can get the details on the northern vet assistance program. It is a program that does, as the minister said, support the large-animal components of veterinaries in those areas where otherwise we would have difficulty getting a vet.

The aspect of equipment puzzles me a bit, in that—I assume from the question that the equipment was owned by the previous vet and he just took his equipment or her equipment with them when they left.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly.

**Mr Knox:** So that would be the requirement of the vet coming in. There may be, though, a possibility under the northern heritage program to look for some funding opportunity. But we have the information and detail of the program as to what it does and doesn't cover, and I'd be glad to get that for you.

**Mr Bisson:** What I'd like to know specifically, is there any kind of a program, because we haven't been able to find anything, that would assist in offsetting rent of location? Because apparently—this is what I understand in the community as a person, I think Kapuskasing, the vets over there have their rent somehow subsidized through the Ministry of Agriculture and we haven't been able to get anything in regard to trying to find out if we can do the same in Monteith. I wonder if you can—

**Mr Knox:** I'd be glad to look into the specifics of that. I know that there are different regions and the requirements of those with local committees set up to say, "Here are the aspects of the program that we need in order to attract a veterinarian." Some of those have included or negotiated to have included in that some sort of relief on rent. In other areas, rent isn't an issue because the square footage rent is so inexpensive that they would look for other components of the program to attract a vet into the area. But again, I'd be glad to get the details of the program.

Just to summarize that, there are local committees in each case that determine what the needs are. The program's objectives are to attract veterinarians into areas where there are large animals where otherwise a vet wouldn't go, and then it's a matter of negotiating between the local committees and our staff to put in place the program.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair:** I recognize Ms Haeck.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Minister, I think you are well aware that there are many farmers in Niagara who are very anxious for the conservation easement program, and I take some solace that it is still on the table. I want to at this point reiterate my support for that. I know you're well aware of that, but I do want to say that publicly. I know that Mr Hansen from the area is as well, and there are a number of the



major farmers in the area who would like to participate in that program.

One of the concerns that definitely I've heard recently—it's been an ongoing issue now for a while and I know you've been involved in some discussions regarding the crop insurance issue for the tender fruit as a result of the two hailstorms last year, both for grapes and peaches. There were a lot of concerns raised, particularly by the council of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, about the viability issue, and I wonder if you can make some comments on the state of the crop insurance plan for tender fruit at this time.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** At the time that I visited the area, just after the second hailstorm, obviously the fact that a very small percentage of the tender fruit producers carry crop insurance was a big issue. At the time, I was told by some individuals that the crop insurance for tender fruit, ie, peaches, was too expensive—

**Ms Haeck:** That's right.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** —that the price that they got for their commodity was too low and therefore it didn't make any sense to take crop insurance and that the plan needed to be changed. I might add, there were other farmers who talked to me about the fact that they self-insured themselves. They didn't necessarily grow all their peaches in one area. They would lease land in other areas and they'd sort of move around and try to avoid the hail.

**Ms Haeck:** I do remember that conversation, yes.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** It didn't necessarily work for everyone in the summer of 1992. One of the things is that if you're running an insurance program, the premiums have to be able to cover the projections in terms of losses and it has to be actuarially sound. Peaches being a somewhat reasonably valuable commodity and with some risk, the premiums are high.

We asked the Niagara Tender Fruit Board to take a look at what kinds of changes it would like within the framework of what crop insurance is all about, that your premiums are supposed to cover the liabilities. As of this particular day, I've not heard back, although I understand that the tender fruit board did hire a group of consultants or individuals to look at the problem and try to come up with a plan or a concept that would be affordable and that they could buy into.

As of now, I haven't seen any response from the tender fruit board. Presumably, they should have received a response back from their consultant. Perhaps the deputy can carry on from there.

**Ms Haeck:** I'd appreciate her comments.

1630

**Ms Rita Burak:** The tender fruit board wanted to have a fresh pair of eyes look at the peach plan particularly, because it was not satisfied with the enrolment

numbers. As the minister has indicated, I believe they are scheduled to meet with the Crop Insurance Commission of Ontario and provide the commission with their views on the basis of that review fairly shortly. I can get the date for you. They have a regularly scheduled meeting with the commission every year.

The other review that is anticipated is a national one next week at the federal-provincial ministers of agriculture meeting. The Canadian Horticultural Council will be making a presentation to all the ministers from all the provinces as well as the federal minister on a number of the priorities that touch every province.

One of the issues they've raised as a critical one for everybody to look at jointly is the coverage of crop insurance, not just for tender fruits but for other horticultural crops, because overall, in all the horticultural crops, the coverage is not what everybody would like. Again, they're hoping there may be a new approach that can be taken to this. Rather than having each province attempt a new program and the federal government having to respond in different ways, a comprehensive national look at all the horticultural crops would be the best approach. So from two perspectives, I think we have some hope that new ways of coming up with a good plan will be here soon.

**Ms Haeck:** I'll yield to my colleagues at this point. I do have another question relating to some of the things happening in the wine industry, but I'll yield to them at this point.

**Mr Wiseman:** I'd like to talk about the price of food and where it's going to go in the next few years. I'd like to talk about it in conjunction with urban sprawl, the protection of class 1, 2 and 3 farm land and the Durham region official plan to destroy 1, 2 and 3 farm land.

I've had some conversations with some people who are knowledgeable about the price of food from the point of view that they do a lot of importing and so on. They're becoming extremely concerned that in the short run, within the foreseeable future, the price of food in this country is going to start going up. We import about 25% of our food. If that ratio starts to increase, then it's going to cost us, because we are going to be in trouble with the people we import from.

These are knowledgeable people. These are people who make their living from importing and selling food. They tell us that this is happening. Yet you look at the Durham region official plan that came back with 22,000 acres of land flipped into urban shadows and into what would be considered designated urban use. Just for those of you who do not know the size of this, downtown Toronto is roughly 24,000 acres of land. This is what Durham region is suggesting.

They suggest that because this farm land is near an urban community, it'll never make any money. I'd like



you to comment on maybe the economics of farming near an urban centre and what we as a government are doing about it, because I don't think buying easements of 2,000 acres for \$20 million is going to solve the problem in the kind of time frame we need to solve it.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We have a major problem, and notwithstanding your opening comment in terms of the price of food going up, we have about the cheapest food in the world, second only to the US in terms of what it costs to feed ourselves, and we have some of the best food produced here, along with what we import. I don't know that the prospect is that food prices are going to go up. The food industry itself continually puts pressure on primary producers to lower the prices they receive, and we've seen this in the last few years when in fact farmers are getting less for their products than they were getting even a decade ago.

The viability of farming in an urban shadow is certainly in question, because the cost of good farm land in urban areas—and this is one of the problems in the Niagara region—the capital cost of land, is so high because the farmers are bidding against speculators who are willing to pay much higher prices than what the land is worth as agriculture, therefore putting a lot of pressure on farm land and the price is bid up.

Any farmer who attempts to get into or buy additional land for expansion in the urban shadow is at a very big disadvantage, to the point that it's not economical, because quite frankly the prices that farmers are receiving for their product is not sufficient for them to cover the costs of their overhead, let alone make a living. That has meant that farming near urban areas has become very suspect and a lot of the land has been bought by people more interested in building houses than in growing corn or anything else.

What are we doing about it? We did a quick review a year ago or so, looking to see if we could come up with some ideas that would work for the preservation of farm land. There's no consensus in rural Ontario among the farm community as to what the best way of doing that should be, although there are a lot of ideas that I'm sure you're aware of. One of them is easements, and land trusts, using the Planning Act. Some people just think we shouldn't worry about it and let the market take care of it. But there's no consensus or no sense of which direction we should go.

While we were doing that, however, the so-called Sewell commission was looking at the Planning Act and revisions there. The commission has come out with some recommendations which include preserving class 1, 2 and 3 farm land for agriculture, period, without severances or allowing houses to spring up.

I think the short answer to the last part of your question is that the government will look at the recommendations in the Sewell commission, of which there are many. Part of the agreement was that the commis-

sion would stay on for the implementation. It would not be another report that would be put on the shelf, that having completed a study, we'd put it on the shelf and forget about it. The intention is that Mr Sewell is going to stay on to work with the government, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and others on the implementation.

I certainly hope we can use the recommendations to preserve agricultural land, but more importantly, we need to look, I guess, beyond this as to how we can make good agricultural land affordable in terms of what it's worth as agricultural land. There's no use paying \$10,000 an acre or some ridiculous price for farm land, because you'll never, ever get that return, and we have to look at how we address the concept of affordability of farm land without interfering too much in the marketplace, and I stress that.

I don't think there are very many people who want us to set the price of farm land. I suspect there are a few, but it's not the overwhelming majority opinion that the government should interfere to that degree. So it's a major challenge of how we make it affordable.

The concept of conservation easements, which we're examining in the Niagara region: I think the idea was that it would be a pilot and see how it would work. There are other ways, obviously, in terms of trusts and so on that we are willing to explore, but we do have to get a handle on it. Otherwise we're going to have urban sprawl all across the GTA, and in my view it's important that we protect and preserve some agricultural land in the confines of the GTA for future generations.

1640

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister. The government caucus's time has expired. I now turn to the Liberal Party.

**Mrs Fawcett:** I'd like to go back for a few minutes to the closure of the stockyards. I had someone call me who trucks livestock to the yards and he's really concerned that the facilities are now not going to be really as good as what was available at the Ontario stockyards, especially around the—well, he mentioned pen size and comfort for the animals at the smaller community barns. One thing that really concerned him was that there was no place for cleaning and disinfecting trucks at the small barns. He's wondering, is he now going to be running into all kinds of environmental problems and people really not wanting him to clean his trucks there at these small barns? He was really concerned about how all that was going to work.

Also, you were mentioning the new one that maybe the sheep farmers or somebody was talking about. If a private person or someone is going to start up a new yard, did I read you right in saying that this trust fund could be used for that? Then again, in view of what else you said about the "no more grants, only loans," is this a loan from the trust fund or will the trust fund money just go back?

So all of those things, and now I'll let you try to answer those.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Let me start with your last question first.

With regard to the trust fund, there have been no decisions made. In fact, I was criticized by some of the media for not having sort of a plan. It was not my intention to decide how that trust money would be spent or whether it would be spent at all, or whether it would just be the interest on the fund perhaps that would go to the industry. I intend to carry out dialogue and consultation with the livestock industry to decide how they would like to spend it.

My sort of priority in the short term would be to make sure that we have good capacity in the sales barn field to handle—that would be my priority, but that's just my first offer in terms of priority. The industry may in fact decide that it should go totally into research. They may decide to only spend the interest. They may decide on an annual grant to the University of Guelph or whatever. That's open in terms of how that money will be spent.

Whether it will be a grant or a loan, I'm certainly willing to listen to what the industry has to say, so I don't have a definitive answer in terms of grant versus loan. If the industry wants to take the money that comes in through the lease and put it out as a grant, I'm willing to listen to that, although I think in terms of preserving the industry, that's not the best way to go.

In terms of the facilities at some of the community sales barns, it's an ironic question, because I have been criticized for being responsible for a second-class operation down at the stockyards because we didn't have the same degree—

**Mrs Fawcett:** Maybe saying these others are worse.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, we didn't have the same degree of inspection down there as was mandated at the community sales barns. They have to have a vet on hand and have it inspected, and some of you will have seen the bad media we got on the people's network recently at the stockyards.

**Mrs Fawcett:** So there won't be a problem then with animals and—

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I don't perceive that there's a problem. There may be some need for some improvements to upgrade the community sales barns; I don't deny that. There may be a need for that, and we'll have to do some monitoring in terms of that issue.

However, I would quickly add, in terms of the calls I have had on this issue, that the trucking industry, I would say quite up front, probably stands to lose more by this announcement than anyone else. Of the animals that were brought down to the stockyards, about 70% or 80% were taken back out again to the places in York and down towards the Hamilton area and other places

where the slaughterhouse facilities actually are, so the people who were doing the trucking were getting trucking two ways. It was good for their business, and I certainly don't deny that at all.

I believe that in terms of their future there still are going to be trucking opportunities to the community sales barns. In fact, it may indeed save the farmers some money in terms of costs if they don't have to go as far. We have to make sure the capacity is there at the community sales barns in terms of the washing and so on.

Obviously, I'm prepared to sit down and talk with the group that represents the community sales barns. They have been, I can say to you, putting a lot of pressure on me since I took this office, that the stockyard was unfair competition and we should get out of the business. I think I have a right now to talk to them and say there are some things that the industry wants to see in terms of washing and cleaning up trucks and so on to maintain a good image. I think I have a right now to talk to them about what they need to do to get their act together so we can get on with business.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Are there certain regulations in place that this must happen? Are those in force?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We're getting too technical here, Ms Fawcett. We'll bring an expert in.

**Dr Tom Baker:** I'm sorry; I'm not 100% sure if that's a requirement in the legislation. It's certainly good practice. In the abattoirs there are truck cleaning facilities which could be utilized in this respect, if there is a gap in some areas. I know the larger sales barns do have those facilities, but I can't be 100% positive if it's in the Livestock Community Sales Act or not.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm certainly aware of some sales barns that do not have those facilities, so there's a point there, but again, we can talk to the community sales barn operators and say, "This is something we need to improve the image" and I'm prepared to have those discussions.

**Mrs Fawcett:** It does cross over into the environmental problems as well.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes.

**Mr Cleary:** Getting back to the stable funding, we've always supported some type of stable funding, and it seems like this may be the time we're going to get it.

I guess we'll talk a little bit about Bill 42. Under the current proposed legislation, Bill 42, while all farmers are expected to pay their \$150 registration fee, you have provided assurance that they may request and receive a full refund without problems.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes.

**Mr Cleary:** Can you assure farmers that they will not at any point in the future wipe out the refundability



option, such as happened with the cattlemen, I understand? Will you assure them of that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I can assure them that as long as I'm minister that would not happen. I can also assure them that if there were to be any change in that, I would subscribe to extensive consultation so that would not happen without their approval.

**Mr Cleary:** As well, there has been some concern expressed over—I think I asked you this before, but I'd just like to get it on the record—what may be asked about each farmer's operation on the registration application. Can the minister provide assurance that any information disclosed on this—although I understand it's common—form will not be used by the ministry and general farm organizations for any other purposes except to collect farm-based data?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm going to ask Rolly Stroeter, who is the expert on this, to come up. While he's coming, what we're going to provide to the GFOs is basically what we call tombstone data: a name, address, phone number and, if it's a business partnership, who the partners are. That's the kind of information we'll be passing along. We will be collecting some other things, but I'll let Rolly answer that, because I believe he has done some what I think he would call pre-screening of a form with some farmers and some farm leaders.

1650

**Mr Rolly Stroeter:** We have pre-screened a preliminary form and tested it. Essentially, it contains the same information or the same type of information that we said it would contain during our consultation last summer in the information sessions. The use of the information is really for our statistical purposes. We need to understand how many farm businesses we have in Ontario. We ask for the name of the principal owners or partners or shareholders, the top three, so to speak. We need an address for those people. We need their telephone numbers. We will be asking about their age in broad ranges, we will be asking for their gross farm income, again in broad ranges so that there is no proprietary information divulged, and we will also be asking what kind of educational background they have.

In addition, we will be asking what kind of business enterprise they have, what kind of commodities they produce, whether they have livestock, and a question on the land acreage that's attached to this farm business, in some very general ways.

All the information is protected under the freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation, so we can use it for statistical purposes only, and in terms of sharing the information with the general farm organizations, we are prepared to share name and address information with them.

**Mr Cleary:** Minister, when do you expect to bring this bill into the House?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I would like to have it in next week, but I'm expecting it's probably going to be the week after, the week of July 12. As I promised you earlier, if we can negotiate with the other House leaders—and I would ask you to pass the word on to your House leader—if we could have a couple of days in committee to allow groups to come in and make presentations, I've agreed to do that. I would like to see it completed and wrapped up before we rise for the summer recess.

**Mr Cleary:** You've answered my next question already. Some in rural Ontario still don't think they know enough about the bill, and if you were agreeing to a few days of hearings, there's a good possibility we could get them in to make their views known. I'm sure their input would assist you in a number of ways, and I hope you get it in and get this settled, this year at least.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I certainly hope so, and I look forward to your support when we get it in there.

**Mr Cleary:** My next question was touched on a bit earlier, Bill 162, to do with deer farming. I have been talking to some of my colleagues about this. It's the Minister of Natural Resources' bill, which we're concerned may stunt some aspects of agriculture. At last sight, which was quite a while ago, I believe the bill extended his regulatory powers to include all animals in Ontario, including domestic animals and livestock.

Specifically, the bill allowed the Natural Resources minister to identify any species as undesirable and thus allow him to eradicate commercial farming of that species. I'm going to give an example: Unless these things change, the Minister of Natural Resources could arbitrarily decide that dairy cattle are undesirable and therefore may not be farmed in the province of Ontario. I think this is an extreme example, but I am concerned over the bill's potential impact on agriculture.

Therefore, I seek a commitment from the minister that all farming, even non-traditional farming animal species, will be regulated by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and that it will continue to work with concerned parties, such as the deer farming association, to develop an effective livestock industry diversification act.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes. As I mentioned briefly earlier, I have a commitment from the new minister and the old Minister of Natural Resources that if Bill 162 goes forward, we will be introducing a livestock diversification act which will cover the so-called non-traditional species. We certainly believe and feel that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for the normal farm animals.

I do not want to mislead you, though, because there is one issue that I want to be up front on, at the risk of causing some controversy: the native species. When I've



met with the deer farmers a couple of times—I've met with some of the groups—I have told them that I did not know whether or not I could defend the farming of native species, ie, the white-tailed deer. That decision is not hard and fast, but I don't want to mislead you today into thinking that I'm committed to fighting on all fronts.

I'm sure you are aware that in some provinces they do native species when it comes to deer. In others they do non-native and in some they do both. We have obviously been having some discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources, with the non-traditional livestock farmers. As I'm sure you're very much aware, the Ontario Federation of Hunters and Anglers has quite a different opinion when it comes to game farming. It's the intention of the government to balance all of those interests.

It's my view that we need to have some regulations in place for the non-traditional livestock game farming. They feel they need and want some regulations. It is our intention that we would have and administer, through an MOU with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the non-traditional livestock. I very much support that. I know the different game farming groups want that, and we expect that will be part of anything coming forward from Bill 162.

**Mr Cleary:** Do I get some more time?

**The Chair:** You have about three minutes.

**Mr Cleary:** Minister, I understand some of the problems, but as long as everyone understands each other—there's a lot of misunderstanding out there, and as long as agriculture gets a fair shake at it—I know there are types of deer being farmed out there, that it's quite an asset to the communities where they are. I know the meat is being sold in other areas, which is good for us, and I do know that they also attract tourists who drive by to see the farm.

I'll get back to the ethanol. You said earlier, and you gave us your guarantee, that you would do everything in your power to honour the existing tax exemptions.

My next question, which I'm having a little bit of difficulty identifying, is on this community action fund or money. How do you go about getting information on that?

1700

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Keith Pinder worked on that. I think you heard what I said earlier. We're working hard on it. My staff and ministry are working with the Ministry of Finance and the federal government to try to get some commitment, because we understand the kind of amounts that are required for investment in the industry and the infrastructure. The investors would like that commitment. We're doing everything we can to do that.

On the access to the community action fund, Keith?

**Mr Keith Pinder:** There are five regional teams that are the source of funding to whom communities can apply for the new program, and if you wish, Mr Cleary, if you had a particular area, I could give you the name and address and phone number of the team chair they could contact.

For the remaining parts of the program, they are not yet announced. We would expect an announcement in the next few weeks, and with that announcement would be details coming out to communities to tell them to whom they can go for more information and for application forms for the remaining part of the program.

**Mr Cleary:** Thanks, I will get in touch with you later on that, then.

**Mr Pinder:** That's just fine.

**Mr Cleary:** Do I have some more time?

**The Vice-Chair:** Would you have a follow-up question?

**Mr Cleary:** I'd just mention that I would follow it up. I will talk to him later and try to find out who these people are. I have to ask it here because I've not had the opportunity to get any information, and believe me, some of us have tried. Any time left?

**The Vice-Chair:** Your time's expired, Mr Cleary. Mr Murdoch, perhaps you could address your question to the deputy minister in the minister's temporary absence.

**Mr Murdoch:** No problem there, and thank you. I think the gentleman here might want to ask the question to Mr Séguin. Anyway, I see he's back here.

Maybe I can ask you just to follow up from what he said, that our apple growers would get their money. Has that happened yet? I talked to someone and they didn't think it had happened. They may not have been told by their people yet or whatever, so I just wondered, if it hasn't, when will it happen so I can tell mine?

**Ms Burak:** I don't think the cheques have flowed yet, but I think if they haven't, we must be within hours of actually signing the federal-provincial agreement. I believe all of the provinces have agreed and the ministers are about to sign, and then cheques can flow.

**Mr Bob Séguin:** Yes, that's easy. For Mr Murdoch's information: As I discussed last week, we've discussed across the provinces with producers a revised national tripartite plan that can be instituted and the payout of the existing one which would then allow moneys to be flowed.

The ministers will be meeting next week. It would seem an opportune time to have the documents cross and all the signatures, and hopefully that will be next week. The intent is to have an interim payment flow almost immediately, probably throughout July, and that would be a substantial amount of money for their existing surpluses. Then the remaining flow, once it's

clear how much product was actually sold in 1991-92, just the past crop year—I should say 1992-93—the intent would be that later on in the year, probably in November or December, there would be a final cheque that would wrap up that crop year. The intent is to have a cheque within the next several weeks definitely, and the documents signed within the next week or so.

**Mr Murdoch:** I just wanted to know that because I know you mentioned it and I was happy to hear you talk about it last time, but I just wanted to follow it up.

Now that the minister's back, I just want to say first, though, that I appreciate all the work the minister does. I've had all these good relations with the minister, and I appreciate all the work you give me and all the help that you do because that sometimes works both ways.

I am happy with what you're doing. I'm impressed that you know the names of all the bureaucrats here. That would be a tough job alone, when you have a roomful of them and you happen to know who they are.

A couple more before we go on: Bill 162 you mentioned again and I know the Liberals talked about it, but it's on the order paper to be brought in this session, and you talked about not next week but the week after, so obviously you know more than we do that maybe we're going to be here most of the summer. I thought maybe you would announce today that we'd be out of here tomorrow.

If it comes in, though, I'm just wondering how you're going to coordinate with it because I think it's coming in for second reading and it will go out to committee, probably. Are you going to have someone take part in it, or how are we going to get this straightened out? If the bill comes in even after second reading and you haven't got involved, that means that I'm not going to like the bill. So I wonder how we're going to deal with that, because maybe when you do get involved—and by “you” I mean the ministry—it's nice if sometimes we can support something.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I don't do the coordination of what bills get in. I have enough trouble getting what I want in. I know that Bill 162 is on the so-called list of things for this session. All I can say is that I have a commitment from my colleagues and from the Minister of Natural Resources that if they proceed with Bill 162 we will be introducing a livestock diversification act before it gets second reading approval. We have that commitment. If it is brought forward, we will be introducing that immediately so that people will be able to see what the other side of the issue is.

**Mr Murdoch:** Okay, you can only get first reading.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes.

**Mr Murdoch:** You can only introduce them. They can't get second.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** They can't get second, catch up.

**Mr Murdoch:** No, I know. Okay. Well, we could catch it up later or whatever. I just wondered if you were prepared.

A couple of other ones: the stockyards, the money you talk about, is that the province's money? It is, eh, the money that you're—who owns them?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** It would probably take a large team of lawyers—let me respond in a serious way. One of the things some producers say is, “Why don't we sell the stockyards and then we could do something with the money.” I am aware that there would be a lot of controversy around who owns the stockyards. I'm sure you are aware that many of the cattlemen who have been around a long time think it belongs to the Ontario Cattlemen's Association or a group like that.

The province, regardless of what government is in place—I guess it's different if you're in opposition, but if you're the government you think the yards belong to the government or the people of Ontario. So rather than risk a long, drawn-out battle which would probably be a legal thing as to who owns them, it was our view that the best way was to lease the property, have the revenue—a significant part of it or a large part of it—go back to the industry and then you'd have something that would be long-lasting rather than just simply have a legal fight as to who owns it and who has the money.

I want to be up front that the province is expecting that some of the money is going to come back to the province from the lease; not, you know, 100% of it is going to go to the industry. We will have those negotiations in discussion with the livestock people to decide how to spend the money that comes in. We don't know yet how much that's going to be, either, and there are no hard-and-fast rules in terms of how the fund would be expended, how it will be built up, or whether or not there would be caps on it.

**Mr Murdoch:** Okay, that's where I was just concerned, because I know governments of today and the other governments would be strapped for cash and I'd hate to see that cash go into the overall pot and then we'd lose it for the industry. Maybe that's a good selling point, then, for our stable funding, that you'll have some good partners to deal with that'll support using the money in the industry with you.

The last one on the Environmental Bill of Rights: The problem I might have with that one is that, as you know, we have a lot of people who have moved into the country, even own 100-acre farms, who don't really farm and I'm concerned that they're going to start complaining and trying to take maybe the next-door farmer to court. I know you mentioned they have to be breaking a law, but is there going to be somebody to monitor this, like a frivolous objection? Because we run into this in the OMB all the time. That's why the OMB is swamped now, because there are so many frivolous objections in there and nobody will stand up and say,



"This is a frivolous complaint and it's not going to go to the OMB." Are we going to run into that? Because I'm afraid—you can talk about the air and if somebody's spreading manure they're polluting the air, to some people's minds. If they start bringing stuff like that, is there going to be anybody in there to monitor this?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** You mentioned the OMB. Just let me touch on that aspect, because if the recommendations from the Sewell commission are accepted, my understanding is that there's a preliminary process that we put in place which, rather than go to a full-blown kind of OMB hearing, there will be an opportunity for the parties to sit down around a table within 30 days to discuss their differences. It will be an attempt to resolve their differences informally before they get to a formal procedure.

The Environmental Bill of Rights in terms of the frivolous complaints—Rita?

**Ms Burak:** I'm sorry, Mr Murdoch; not having the bill in front of me I forget the precise procedures that will be followed, but let me give you two responses. First of all, to just reiterate, as the minister said in response to one of the questions he's already had, that a significant change that was made in the draft bill to accommodate the rights that have already been established for farmers under the Farm Practices Protection Act was to, in the case of public nuisance, ensure that that act had primacy for odour, dust and noise. I think the farm community saw that as a positive response from the government.

In any other category of potential complaints, again, I'd have to have the act to refer to but, as I understand it, the Ministry of Environment and Energy will have very sensible discretion at its disposal to know when a full-blown inquiry is really necessary. Certainly the other ministries, as that was being developed, were concerned about this and I think most people were more comfortable with the final draft of the bill.

1710

**The Acting Chair (Mr Bill Murdoch):** I don't want Ted to lose any time so I'd better get to the Chair. Mr Arnott, we'll hear from you.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Minister, I've got 10 minutes and five questions, so I'll be brief. If you could be brief I'd appreciate it too. I'd like an update on the GATT situation from the perspective of agriculture in Ontario. I assume that will be one of the subjects of discussion at your federal-provincial agriculture ministers' meeting that you're going to next week. Can you give us any information on that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, you're correct. At every meeting I've ever attended there has been an update on GATT, and most of them have been optimistic that an agreement was pending. We will get an update again.

Let me just very quickly say that with a new secretary there's some belief that maybe this is what it will take to get an agreement. There has been some movement, and the US and the EC in fact have come to some agreements. There seems to be a resolution of differences, so there's a sense that there will be an agreement.

We in Ontario have supported a balanced position in terms of article XI and the export subsidy reductions, and continue to support that and hope that will be our position and that we can get an agreement based on that. Whether or not we're going to get it, again we'll have to see what the update is. It's not as optimistic as I would like to think, and I've heard more in the last six months that leads me to be a bit pessimistic. But there is some hope there will be a GATT agreement, and some people are saying by the end of 1993.

**Mr Arnott:** I know that the people in Wellington county, the majority of them, do support the balanced position that you have put forward in support of strengthening and clarifying article XI. Hopefully, that's the outcome that we can achieve.

The second question is deer farming, and it's been raised by a number of different members on this committee. I think you said the livestock diversification act would be companion legislation to the game and fish amendments that the Ministry of Natural Resources put forward. Would it not be sensible to make a commitment that as far as you're concerned the proclamation date, the date at which the bill would come into effect, would be the same date as the amendments to the Game and Fish Act, such that it would be companion legislation for all intents and purposes? I'm concerned that there might be a time lag in there where there'd be a period of time when the one piece of legislation was in force and the other was not because of the timing.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm not the expert on how these things get proclaimed, obviously. I hear what you're saying and I certainly would be supportive of them coming into effect at the same time, if we can do that legislatively. I'm not opposed to that. I'd have to have someone advise me on the proclamation of various bills and acts, but I hear what you're saying and I would indeed support the concept.

**Mr Arnott:** Yes, I think it would be important in terms of not having a time lag if you're really talking about companion legislation.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** It certainly could cut down on the phone calls and the letters that we would receive if they could happen at the same time.

**Mr Arnott:** Right. The move of the ministry to Guelph, the head office: What is going on there? Is it still the plan of the government?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** It still is. The plan is to move and it's been confirmed. I think there's been one more



announcement in Guelph again recently that it's still confirmed and it's happening. I believe there is some activity that is happening there and some tenders have been let. It's not going to happen as quickly, but basically it's been stretched out over a longer period of time.

**Mr Arnott:** The intention is to then have the operations headquartered in Guelph as of what date at the present time?

**Ms Burak:** As a result of the expenditure control plan announcement, as the minister said, the project will be delayed somewhat because we have been directed to scale back. That means we have to get the designers, the planners, involved in how you would do that. We're looking right now at how costs could be contained from the original estimate. Also, because of the expenditure control plan, there will obviously be fewer staff in that building, so we're in that process of reassessment now. We're reluctant at this point to give a precise date because that does lead the hopes of staff about a certain date and we want to be sure that the tenders will be let and construction will go as—

**Mr Arnott:** I know they're all looking forward to moving to Wellington county.

**Mr Wiseman:** Mr Chair, I request a 20-minute recess.

**The Acting Chair:** I guess that's in order, if you want. I guess we'll have a 20-minute recess then. Can we do that?

**Interjection:** You're chairing.

**The Acting Chair:** Do we vote on that?

**Mr Arnott:** I have another question, Mr Chairman.

**The Acting Chair:** Just a minute, if we're going to take a 20-minute recess. He requested it.

**Mr Arnott:** Is there any requirement that if one member requests a recess, we have to do it?

**Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum):** If it's agreed to.

**The Acting Chair:** All right, after agreement on that.

**Mr Cleary:** I don't think we agreed to it.

**The Acting Chair:** That's what I'm asking right now.

**Interjection:** No.

**Clerk of the Committee:** It was just a quorum call.

**The Acting Chair:** Okay, then let's just carry on.

**Mr Arnott:** Minister, on the issue of waste management, your government has stated very clearly that no incineration of waste will be allowed under the term of the government. Energy-from-waste proposals which have been put forward in the past for a number of years will not be allowed. Even test burning of tires in cement kilns is not going to be allowed. Yet prime agricultural

land is designated as potential landfill sites. We're losing prime land to that purpose, yet the whole thrust of the Sewell commission report, and I think your priority as minister, has been to strengthen regulations so that prime farm land will be maintained. I would like to ask you what your view is on putting garbage in prime agricultural land areas.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm not particularly happy with the fact that when landfill sites are being sought out, it seems they always end up on agricultural land. We know that if you're going to have landfill sites—and I think we are going to have them for a while yet; we haven't got the creation of garbage under control. I think our society has changed to the point that we have, over the last couple of decades at least, been creating more and more garbage and we've had to find something to do with it. Unless we get the garbage stream under control, we're going to continue to have a need for landfill sites.

It's unfortunate that when you look for suitable land and you find the necessary clay that you're looking for, it usually ends up being prime agricultural land. I think that's unfortunate. It doesn't make me happy, but I guess at the end of the day, it's better to perhaps do that and dislocate some agriculture than it is to put it in a limestone quarry and have it leach out into water-courses, which was a proposal that was on the table in my community back in the late 1980s, where they wanted to put it basically into a quarry. There was a lot of concern that the leachate would get into the water-course. It doesn't make me happy that it's farm land that's being looked at, but I can't do much about that.

You mentioned incineration in your preamble. Although I know there are some proponents of that who think that's a good idea, the government, the former minister and the current minister still have some reservations about the safety if you take the incineration and you spread whatever it is that goes up the chimney, although I recognize and accept the fact the technology is better than it was just a few years ago. There may come a day when incineration is much more acceptable. We as a government believe that its day has not yet come.

Meanwhile, that means that I have to live with the groups that are looking, including in my own community, two communities actually, two counties, at agricultural land for landfill sites. Three sites were announced in Hastings county. It's of major concern to the farm community. But it's one of those, I guess, evils that we'll have to live with in the short term until we can get our garbage stream under control.

**Mr Arnott:** Thank you, Minister. One last question. Mr Berendsen of Maryborough township—you and I have been discussing this since you were elected in 1990 and appointed minister. Last year at this time in the estimates committee, we talked about this and I

asked you whether if indeed he was able to provide an independent laboratory analysis that the water was polluted, you would give some consideration to meeting with him and bringing the issue to some final resolution. I understand now that he's been contacted by you and that it has been offered to him to have a well drilled on his property at the government's expense and that if he wishes to seek further redress he can do so through the courts. Is that correct?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** That is correct.

1720

**Mr Arnott:** You said earlier that the only reason you sent water to his farm for so long, at a fairly significant cost, was based on humanitarian reasons. Is that correct?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** That's right. I'm still willing to offer the well on humanitarian grounds, basically. The scientists, lawyers, technocrats and others still dispute the fact that there's proof the water is contaminated to the degree that's being claimed. So I'm doing it on a humanitarian basis as opposed to this disputable scientific evidence to show that.

**Mr Arnott:** Can you give me an estimate as to how much it has cost the government to ship water to his farm since you initiated that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I can't. I don't know whether anyone else can or not. Ken Knox seems to be coming forward.

**Mr Knox:** I'd have to check the records, but I believe it's \$36,000 for a year's supply of water.

**Mr Arnott:** You've delivered it for more than a year, though.

**Mr Knox:** We delivered it for more than a year, that's correct. It would probably be a year and a half that we delivered water to Mr Berendsen.

**Mr Paul Klopp (Huron):** Mr Minister, knowing how hard you work at this job, I think you're doing a pretty good job. When I think back where governments used to put agriculture, I think you've increased its awareness in government, and there's also the fact that with the times we're in, we don't have money free-flowing. I think you've done a pretty good job, and I try to say that as non-partisan as possible.

What I'd like to know is a little bit about a few people back in my area. Maybe I can get it on the record and send it to them. We cancelled AgriCorp moving to Chatham, and a number of people asked, "Does that mean then that the process is gone?" Could you please, for the record, explain now what's going to happen with AgriCorp and where it's at?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The AgriCorp bill had first reading in the House and hopefully some sunny afternoon when the House leaders decide there's some housekeeping bills that should be dealt with, I can get the concurrence of opposition to deal with it. I don't

think it's contentious. I haven't heard anybody speak against it. I would hope that we could get it dealt with quickly in the House so that AgriCorp in fact would be set up.

The expectation is that the headquarters, which was intended at one time for Chatham, will be headquartered in Guelph. In light of the earlier question about the move, we'll incorporate AgriCorp into the building in Guelph.

It is our intention to proceed with that. In fact, it's getting to the point where it's going to be of some urgency that we get that passed. I'd like to get it done before we rise. I don't know whether that's possible or not. I have to depend to some extent on the House leaders to negotiate what bills get into the House and what don't.

**Mr Klopp:** It came up a little earlier, it was mentioned I guess from our caucus, the issue of saving land. I think we're all aware of that, but I guess one of my things has always been that if you make it that it's worth farming or something, they'll take care of saving the land themselves.

With the community economic development program and the issue right around Toronto—I think we even talked about it a little earlier with some of the farm leaders who were here, about some of the newer markets. We're having a lot of different ethnic groups coming and they don't want to import. I think somebody said 25% of our food is imported. Do you see CED working with some of these groups maybe around the GTA, the shadow of Toronto, to try to get some of these markets opened up? Is that possible? What's your opinion on that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I am very optimistic about Jobs Ontario Community Action. I think it's going to take a little while to get it operating, but I'm hoping that in the agrifood industry, the producer group, the processor group, and I'm hoping some of the existing farm groups, will look at this program as a way of helping them to get into some value-added niche marketing.

One of the concerns I have is that of the consumer's dollar at the food checkout, the farmer's probably only getting a few cents of that back. We need to look and explore ways of getting more of the consumer dollar back into the hands of the farmer to make farming viable.

This particular program, along with the community bond fund, I think is going to provide some opportunities and, as legislators, we need to talk to the different farm groups about what opportunities are there for them to get some access to this fund, although as I said earlier, this is not a grant; this is a program that is designed for true community economic development, which means helping people to help themselves through their own money and through other dollars that are



available in the community.

We know that there are billions and billions of dollars in rural Ontario on deposit in banks. Most of it is not going back into rural Ontario. It goes off to head office and it's being lent out internationally. I feel that this program, along with the other, the community bond fund, will allow opportunities for communities to take the resources that they have and reinvest them in those communities.

Whether it's around the GTA or in other areas across the province, it's an opportunity I think that we should seize, because quite frankly, neither the government of Ontario nor the government of Canada have the resources dollar-wise to put out in terms of support on an ongoing basis. Money is becoming a scarce commodity in governments and we need to look at more innovative ways of supporting agriculture. I think the community development fund is certainly one way of doing it.

**Mr Bisson:** Two things: I guess one of them is a plea and the other one is a question.

One of the only government offices in the community of Matheson happens to be a Ministry of Agriculture office and I guess I would make the plug and ask that hopefully during the exercise of fiscal constraint that we're going through as a government, that be considered and we protect that office, not only because it's one of the only offices—actually, the only provincial office in that community—but because it serves a very useful function. It's the centre of the agricultural community within that particular area of the province. So I ask—I'm looking at you.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Okay.

**Mr Klopp:** No personal plugs here.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Just let me say something else, which ties back to the previous question. I was quite involved in terms of the development of that program, Jobs Ontario Community Action, in terms of the rural Ontario perspective. One of the things that program has is that it is across ministries. People who live in rural Ontario will be able to go to the Ministry of Natural Resources and ask about the community action program and they will know about it. There are seven different ministries involved in this, which is important in rural Ontario.

It's not just Economic Development and Trade or it's not Municipal Affairs, but that particular program has seven ministries involved, and they will be able to give, once the information is available—it's not out yet in terms of a brochure, but you'll be able to go to other ministries.

Why does that tie in with your question? I'm hoping that the ministry offices we have and that other ministries have offices in rural Ontario will start to be able to offer information, whether it's a phone number or someone they can call if they want information about

government programs or what's happening. I see our offices across rural Ontario as being well positioned to provide information and services not only for our programs but potentially for other ministries as well.

We have some duplication and overlap in terms of ministries and I for one am very interested in cutting out that overlap and duplication. Obviously, from my perspective, we want to maintain our offices because they are strategically located to serve the whole province. I certainly would be wanting to maintain that office, and if we can increase the services and information that are available through that office, then it would be all the better for the people of Matheson and surrounding area.

**Mr Bisson:** I think that makes a lot of sense too, because being about the only window of access for the provincial government in that area, to expand that role a little from being strictly the Ministry of Agriculture to also do some of the stuff that do in Northern Development and other ministries would make a lot of sense. I'm sure that's appreciated.

I want to take this opportunity—and it's an issue that I know the minister and the ministry and the caucus in general came to some decision on in regard to the agricultural college around Haileybury. I know that is a difficult decision, but I would have two concerns after the decision being made. The first concern is what happens to those students within the area, in northern Ontario specifically, who want to pursue education in the agricultural field; the considerations being made for those students to access, because they're not going to be able to do that through that facility. I'm just wondering how far the ministry has got in dealing with the needs of northern students vis-à-vis agricultural studies.

1730

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm going to share the spotlight and ask Norris Hoag, who has been working with and talking to the different groups and has in fact met with a group, I believe it was last night, to talk about what's happening at New Liskeard and surrounding research activities. Norris, the question is about the students—

**Mr Bisson:** I'll lump into that the second part of the question, which would be the research initiatives being done by that college. How do we plan to continue some of that stuff that was being done, especially with regard to the northern issues around agriculture and the specific things they were working on?

**Mr Norris Hoag:** The first part of the question has to do with the educational aspect in the diploma program. There is a general course being offered as far as agriculture is concerned, and then there is a specific course, which is a unique one, the two-year diploma program in equine management.

First of all, with the general agriculture business management course, our plans are to offer the second



year of that course for those students who took their first year in the year that has just concluded; they will have an opportunity to complete their education at the institution they started in. We are going to then offer the opportunity for any student who wishes to enter into the remaining colleges, the four institutions that are left, Ridgetown, Guelph, Kemptville and Alfred. We have adequate space to accommodate those students, and the courses essentially cover the same areas.

That's how we are taking care of the students. Every student within the system who had applied and had conditional acceptance, as long as they meet those conditions, will have a place within the remaining system. Does that answer your question in terms of the students?

**Mr Bisson:** I would have a suggestion afterwards.

**Mr Hoag:** Okay. As far as the research is concerned, and that was the subject of the meeting last night, we are looking at the unique research areas that have been conducted at New Liskeard. They're unique probably for two reasons. First of all, the crops programs that we have conducted at New Liskeard are unique because of the climatic conditions, so we have concern that we need to address those issues. We also have a unique situation on a provincial level in that we have created some facilities; in fact, the facilities for cow-calf have been created at New Liskeard as well as for sheep.

We are looking at those priorities in relationship to the priorities of our total research program across the province, and we were getting initiated last night. You would appreciate the difficulty in terms of looking at one sector's priorities in view of another sector's priorities. Obviously, there is an element of protection by that sector for its particular considerations, although last night I think was a very open meeting, and we have made a good start at trying to get some rationalization of those objectives.

The Ontario Cattlemen's Association attended our meeting last night. We are considering the provincial objectives as far as cow-calf are concerned, and there is some indication that the cattle community may very well have some money that may help continuing some of the work that has gone on there.

At this stage of the game, it's too early to really say how we're going to do it or just exactly which programs we are going to continue. It's a matter of negotiating and consulting with both the local community at New Liskeard as well as the specific commodity groups to see what we can do. Obviously, if we're going to reshape the priority deck, it may well mean we're going to be taking some of the funds we're using in some of the ongoing institutions and keep some of the activity going there. Now, that's not an announcement; that's merely an indication of a possible outcome of the consultation we are going through.

Clearly, the crops programs are the most unique. The livestock ones we could probably conduct in other places. With the crops programs, there's no way that we can re-create that particular micro-environment, so probably that becomes our highest priority.

**Mr Bisson:** Just as a suggestion, is there a possibility of looking at how we can partner with other institutions, such as Northern College, perhaps, to offer some of these programs through the Contact North system in regard to telecommunications advantages we have now? I'm not sure how technically the ministry would be able to do this, but there is a need for northern students to be able to stay within the area to go to school. Can we take a look at partnering with Northern College or whatever it might be and utilize facilities, that you can bring the classroom from southern Ontario, through telecommunications get it up into the north, and after that tie the research facility in somehow? I don't know exactly how you do that, but it is maybe an option.

**Mr Hoag:** There is some consideration for that now. I believe the minister, in his previous answer, referred to the independent study program on correspondence courses. We don't have a general agriculture business management diploma program complete yet in terms of independent study. There is a complete course as far as horticulture is concerned. It is not specifically aimed at northern Ontario, but it is a general horticulture program.

You do raise another interesting question, that is, that the diploma program is only one phase of the educational program we have offered in New Liskeard. There has been quite an extensive effort in continuing education, and that will probably continue but be centred out of Kemptville in terms of serving northern Ontario, and it could very well be that we will make use of, in some way, the network in northern Ontario.

**Ms Haeck:** I know the minister is well aware of the winery industry that we have located in the peninsula. In talking to both Don Ziraldo, who is a key player with Inniskillin, and Klaus Reif, who is the owner of Reif Estate Winery, both of them have indicated that the supply of good vinifera hybrids is really not enough for the industry as a whole. Is there something being done to promote additional plantings or to deal with some of the land use questions that have been out there to make sure that we do have a good supply of the vinifera grapes for the local wineries?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I think the response has been to the industry itself, the fact that there is a need for more of the grapes where there's a market in terms of wine. I have not been out there encouraging people to do things, but I am aware, from talking to people in the Niagara region, that some people are even taking some of the tender fruit production out and putting in grapes because they see there's some future in terms of the wine industry in that region. I personally have not been

actively encouraging that, but it has been happening, and I think it's a natural response to the marketplace. Do any staff want to comment?

**Mr Knox:** Specifically, we don't have a program to assist in the transfer of one variety of grapes to another nor to remove tender fruit and put it into grapes, but the Ontario Grape Growers Marketing Board does work closely with the industry to determine and look at those marketing needs and convey that information to farmers. As you know, the grape board and the Ontario Tender Fruit Producers Marketing Board share an office, so there's a good sharing of information as to what the future potential is for the various kinds of grapes.

There was, in the past, a program to remove undesirable kinds of grapes, but it wasn't to encourage specific ones, only that we removed old ones and that the industry, looking at the market conditions, was replacing those with grapes that were more profitable or had the potential to be more profitable.

**Ms Haeck:** Definitely, the grape pull-out program totally changed the face of the winery industry in the peninsula, shall we say for the better, because obviously as an industry in Ontario, it's being rewarded with a lot of recognition across the world.

But the land use question and making sure we have a good supply is still definitely an issue. There are severances being put forward. I know that none of these crops immediately spring forth and there's a profit the next year, but around the land use question, this is definitely a viable crop. I would hope that if the questions arise, there is some encouragement given for that kind of planting to take place.

1740

**Mr Knox:** Not dealing with the land use aspect, but from the point of view of conservation easements—I think you covered that in an earlier question, Minister—we do have extension staff in the field who are providing that kind of assistance and advice to farmers: "Here's the read on the market conditions so that you can get the best possible response from the acre of land in the market conditions that are there." Those services are provided through our local agricultural office and the Vineland research station.

**Ms Haeck:** The wineries themselves are indicating, these two wineries in particular, that they want to see that there's a good basis for agriculture and maintaining it. The pressure of severances is definitely one that they want to thwart, because they want to make sure that their supply of the vinifera grapes is there; the severance issue is one they're not terribly in favour of.

**Mr Cleary:** I've got a few housekeeping matters here that I want to get on the record. One is to do with crop insurance. I'm sure it hasn't been touched on in this session yet, and it's an issue that some ladies in Ontario have brought up. I'm sure you're familiar with

the cases: women farmers who feel they are being discriminated against on a gender basis. These women would like to know what the minister is doing to ensure that women farmers who happen to be married are permitted to run a viable farm operation and receive crop insurance in their own right, without being dependent upon their husbands.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The Crop Insurance Commission of Ontario has developed a number of criteria to determine whether or not the spouses are sufficiently independent for insurance purposes. I want to make it very clear; I'm sure you are aware that there's no intent to discriminate against women in any way. The reason for it is that some farmers would like to divide up the property they farm into different segments, because some lands are more at risk than others when it comes to weather perils. All the commission has tried to determine is that if two individuals wish to be insured separately, they clearly do operate independent, separate operations.

There is an appeal mechanism if they don't like the decision of the commission. They are afforded the opportunity—in fact, there have been a couple of cases recently where women who were denied on the first go-round were granted, through the appeal process, the right to have their own insurance.

It is a bit of a precautionary measure that's in there, and it isn't meant to discriminate against spouses. Three brothers or three sisters could be in farming as well and there would be an attempt to have it covered under one contract. I think your point is important, but the criteria are in place and it is an attempt to deal with it fairly.

**Mr Cleary:** Another question I have is on eggs. We got an inquiry last February and had sent a letter off to your ministry. Specifically, it comes from some egg producers who are experiencing problems with pests and rodents in their coops. I think I know the answer, but they were wondering if there was any government assistance for this.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** When I was farming, we used to put out traps and catch those animals that got into the chicken coop. But I'm going to let the deputy answer that one; I don't know if she's had any experience with rodents in a chicken coop.

**Ms Burak:** As a matter of fact, several months ago I met with members of our egg board and they did bring along a veterinarian who spoke about the growers' concerns that this problem was getting worse. We did genuinely explore whether there was anything we could do of a financial nature to encourage producers to do the things that they must do in their operations to cut down on the problem, and at the end of the day, given the tight fiscal position of the province, we weren't able to come up with a special assistance program.

But I do understand, though, as a result of the



prominence that issue was given to the egg board, they have internally come up with additional extension aids and suggestions for individual growers to try to get a better handle on this problem. The last time they chatted with us I think they felt they were doing as much as they could within their own organization to try to get a grip on this problem.

**Mr Cleary:** Maybe the minister or the deputy would like an opportunity to offer any comments or changes to the egg grading regulation, if any.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The cracked egg issue or the new resolutions?

**Mr Cleary:** Any changes to the egg grading regulations.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** As you know, there were some federal regs that came out, and then whether or not the province was going to try to put exemptions in, and the cracked egg issue has been around for some time. Dr Baker can enlighten us on that issue.

**Dr Baker:** Yes, as you are aware, there was a health concern with that product going into retail markets. The status of that situation right now is that several egg processors have challenged, through the courts, the federal government's jurisdiction in respect to the enforcement of federal regulations in federally registered premises; basically that's if the sales are going to be intraprovincial.

This is before the courts now and I don't think really there's too much that we can offer in additional information until that question is settled, unless there's a specific question perhaps.

**Mr Cleary:** But there are no changes provincially that the province has brought forward?

**Dr Baker:** We have advised the egg industry that we are trying to harmonize provincial regulations with the federal standards, but that's not going to be in place for some months yet, I don't think.

**Mr Cleary:** I have another concern here, but it's potatoes this time. Some time ago we had an incredible story that your government would not allow an Ontario-based potato chip maker to have a licence to buy Ontario potatoes unless they handed over intimate details of the company to the government. "It seems that bureaucratic red tape overlooked rural Ontario. As a result, this processor was forced," and I'm just quoting, "to buy six million pounds of US potatoes."

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I think what you're referring to is the potato protection board which was set up in 1984 or 1985.

**Mr Knox:** Four years ago.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Four years ago. It was set up by a previous government to protect the growers. The processors and the growers put the money into it to make sure that the growers got paid. In order to deal

with that particular legislation, the people who are in the processing had to supply some information to the government in order to participate in that board.

Subsequently, I guess somewhat because of that celebrated case—in fact, the company that I think you are referring to was handing out potato chips in my office, at least on the first floor of our building, some year ago.

**1750**

We met with the board, we talked to the processors and we decided to disband that. It was something they felt was no longer necessary. We eliminated that particular board. It was an irritant to the processor and we said to the processor and the growers, "Fine, if you feel there's no longer a need for it, we will eliminate that," and we have. The amount of money in the fund has been turned back and we've set up a trust which is going to go, in most cases, to research. We've eliminated that irritant.

I would say, in response to the details of your question, that buying those potatoes offshore was, I think, an attempt by the processor to make some waves and make some headlines that the potatoes were available here. We can't do anything about that now. But we did eliminate that particular fund, that particular criteria, at the request of the processors and the board.

I might add that we also did the same thing in the vegetable protection fund board that was in existence and was seen as an irritant and red tape. The growers and the processors came to me and said: "This is red tape. We have to put the money aside and it's no longer necessary." We've eliminated that particular operation as well and the money has gone back to form part of a trust fund which will, again, go to research. We have been eliminating some of those irritants that have been out there for the processors and ultimately the farmers kind of got tied up in it.

Those are two particular boards, if you want, that could be classified as being red tape and causing processors to fill out more forms and send off cheques and so on. We've eliminated two of those at the request of the industry. We have responded to those concerns, I think, quite aggressively. In fact, some people have been somewhat surprised that we have responded in such a way.

**Mr Cleary:** Just a little bit of a follow-up. I realize I haven't done all the research on this next one, but recently a plant closed in our part of Ontario and moved the better part of its operations to Alabama. Four of the laid-off workers decided to go into the potato chip business and started a nice little operation. Of course, they came after me and they told me their venture's run into a big snag. They're having great difficulty in securing Ontario potatoes or any Canadian potatoes. As I said, I haven't got into the background of this. They don't know where to go. I can't help but wonder what's



happened when our own residents can't tap into our own commodities and have to purchase from the United States. I guess I would need your help, and I would appreciate any comments you might have so I could pass the Hansard along to these four gentlemen.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm going to ask for support here. Anyone who wants to volunteer, please come forward.

I would say one thing: There certainly are potatoes here. In fact, I hear concerns on the other side that we have a surplus. I would add that the potato board not too long ago, without much fanfare—and I'm not looking for fanfare here—donated several thousand pounds to the food bank. There are potatoes available. An old problem farmers have experienced in the past is getting their product to market. This may be another example of where we can't get the processor and the producer hooked up together so that one is growing or producing what's needed for the processor. We may have a lot of potatoes, but maybe they're not the right kind of potatoes for making potato chips. That would be my guess, that we don't have the right potatoes or, if we have a surplus, that we don't have the right kind.

I'm sure you're aware, Mr Cleary, of the eastern Ontario vegetable cooperative that is now trying to match what they grow with what the processor and the retailer will sell. I think the problem you've identified can be eliminated if we get a little bit more communication going between the primary producer and the processor. We could certainly grow the potatoes in eastern Ontario; I think it's a matter of growing the right kind.

Having said all that, Bob, did you get elected? You didn't mention the name of the company.

**Mr Cleary:** The eastern Ontario one, right here.

**Mr Séguin:** Mr Minister, to answer the question from Mr Cleary, you've covered most of it in your response. The potato board approached us in the early spring. There were considerable surpluses, as there were across all of eastern Canada; potatoes were very available. However, in the last several months, there have been substantial sales and prices have recovered.

I do believe that in the case Mr Cleary is mentioning it could be the type of potato, because certainly in table stock and in our other stocks of potatoes, they are available. They're available at a little higher price now than they were a few months ago, but they are available, if not in Ontario, certainly in the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

One of the concerns the board has now is that this year's crop may also be a surplus crop and that prices will again drop. So processors should have access, unless it's a specific type of crop, a specific type of potato, in which case maybe we could work with the processors to identify what else we could help with to

make sure they have access to that stock.

**Mr Cleary:** I must apologize. I don't have all the information, but I thought it was a good chance to try to get some input.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** To reiterate a little bit of what I said, if the processor or the people who have taken it over would talk to the eastern Ontario co-op group that's out there looking to see what they can grow and what they can sell, I think there's a good opportunity here for a nice marriage that would be good for eastern Ontario.

**Mr Cleary:** I will pass that along. How much more time do we have?

**The Chair:** You have two minutes.

**Mr Cleary:** I don't know whether I should get into this next one in two minutes. It's to do with tobacco.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Do they grow that in eastern Ontario now?

**Mr Cleary:** No, but we transport an awful pile of it. It's to do with taxes. We've got a very thriving business on the smuggling part of it.

**Mr Kloop:** How well are you doing?

**Mr Cleary:** Do you want me to answer that? Between the United States and the native reserve, smuggling products that are not subject to any tax, I have to mention that that's just not a Sunday afternoon activity; that takes place nightly, winter and summer, on the river, and it's complete with gunfire and everything that goes with it. This province and our farmers are losing millions of dollars. We're faced with real hard problems there. As I said, we're losing millions of dollars. These tobacco products are shipped all over this province and maybe all over Canada. As I have limited time, I just ask the minister for any comments he might have.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I think you've reiterated the problem, and I accept the fact that it exists and it is serious. I think you're correct when you say that the distribution probably ranges across Canada; maybe up into Alaska even, I've heard.

It's something that is being discussed across different ministries. Obviously, it's not strictly Ag and Food, although when you talk about money for the Treasurer, you have my attention, because for every dollar we lose, potentially we will see reductions in our budget because of lost revenue, so we're concerned about it. We have no active participation in what's happening in terms of how to control the problem and get a handle on it, but I am aware that several ministries are working cooperatively to try to address this. Of course, the federal government is involved in this too in terms of intercountry trade, if that's what you can call the activities that are happening. They have some involvement too, and it makes it difficult when you have so many ministries involved.

But it certainly is a serious problem, and it is being examined. I don't know that anybody has the solution yet. If there were an easy solution, I think it would have been addressed some time ago.

I have heard stories very much like you've mentioned, in terms of the gunfire and the fact that on the river some evenings and nights it sounds like a war zone. I've heard those stories and am aware of them and it's obviously a concern, something we need to address, both on the tax revenue side and in terms of the tobacco industry.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. It now being past

6 of the clock, our time is up for today. I want to thank you for being here, as well as the deputy minister and the senior staff representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. You've proven your dedication to farmers in rural Ontario and we appreciate your presence here.

We have completed four hours and 23 minutes approximately, of our time, with approximately three hours and seven minutes remaining. We will reconvene this committee tomorrow, Wednesday, June 30, immediately after routine proceedings or at 3:30. This committee now stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1801.





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Keith Pinder, director, rural development secretariat  
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Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

**\*Wiseman, Jim** (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

#### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Cleary, John C. (Cornwall L) for Mr Mahoney

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L) for Mr Ramsay

Klopp, Paul (Huron ND) for Mr Jamison

Murdoch, Bill (Grey PC) for Mr Carr

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia



## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 30 June 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Agriculture  
and Food

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 30 juin 1993

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Ministère de l'Agriculture et  
de l'Alimentation

Président : Cameron Jackson  
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Wednesday 30 June 1993

The committee met at 1536 in committee room 2.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

**The Chair (Mr Cam Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. Hopefully, we'll be able to complete our estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The clerk advises we have approximately three hours and six minutes remaining. In this regard, I think there's been some mutual agreement among subcommittee members that we order up our business in a fashion that will allow us the opportunity to complete our estimates today.

I have assigned approximately 55 minutes to the Liberal caucus, 55 to the PC caucus and about 30 minutes to the NDP caucus, which—

**Interjection:** Is 30 minutes too long.

**The Chair:** Which is 30 minutes too long. So let me rework that, and as I do that, the second issue was that Mr Cleary has requested a change in rotation and that's been agreed to by the Chair. So for the next 25 minutes, we'll allow the Liberals to proceed.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** Thanks, Mr Chairman. The first thing I'd like to talk about is BST. I have heard concerns about BST, the controversial growth hormone that boosts milk production. I understand an American study showed that if BST were used, production would increase 5% but consumer sales would fall 15% to 20%. BST has not yet been approved for sale here, and there's considerable opposition to it from many farmers I know, but I understand that at least one member of the Ontario Milk Marketing Board is strongly pushing it. I would like to know what the minister's thoughts are on the use of BST and if he intends to approve it in this province.

**Hon Elmer Buchanan (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I have no plans to approve this. The licensing of BST is the responsibility of the federal government, Health and Welfare Canada. I have remained fairly silent on the issue. I've been waiting for the dairy industry and the milk producers to come to terms with the issue, and if it's their view that this is something that should be licensed for use in the province, then I would support it. If they chose not to, obviously I would accept that.

I'm fully aware, though, that there's a consumer issue here as well, and I think that's the issue you raise when you say there might be a decline in milk consumption which would hurt the whole industry. But we have no plans. We're waiting to see what the federal government's response will be.

The licensing in the US seems to be imminent, although there is some opposition, as I'm sure you're aware. There's a campaign being carried on against the

licensing in the US although we're told it's probably going to happen there.

We will be having discussions with the federal government to see where it is going. At this point, I've not had any discussions with the federal people in agriculture, but we are going to a meeting next week and this is something that perhaps will be discussed, so I can get a sense of where Agriculture Canada is and from there we will move on, but at this point in time I have no plans. In fact, when I ask the dairy industry and milk producers to give me their view on this, they too have been quiet and haven't taken an official position, at least not to me.

**Mr Cleary:** I understand from what you tell me that you have a meeting with the federal Minister of Agriculture next week.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Next week there is a federal-provincial conference of agriculture ministers in Prince Edward Island. It will be an opportunity to discuss this issue and see if the federal officials have any plans to go ahead with licensing. But at this point, they have not communicated such to us.

**Mr Cleary:** The next thing I'd like to talk about is the Fair Tax Commission. I have heard concerns from all sectors over the establishment and efforts of the Ontario Fair Tax Commission. I might note that the commission was scheduled in our part of eastern Ontario on June 14; they tell me, which I'm not sure I believe, that it was cancelled due to lack of interest. I know many people are concerned about the level and extent to which they are taxed. It is my guess that insufficient interest reflects quite simply a disbelief that the commission would have any impact. The presenters probably know best.

Indeed, certain agricultural groups have expressed that the Fair Tax Commission produced its environment and taxation report without any consultation with representatives from rural Ontario. As the commission was established by the Minister of Agriculture and Food and Finance Minister Floyd Laughren, and as rural Ontario is concerned with the report, which it views as an urban agenda for farming, I would welcome the minister's views on the commission's recommendations for pesticides, land drainage, farm income support programs, corn and soybeans.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Just let me get this straight: This was the Fair Tax Commission hearings in eastern Ontario, or was it one of the subcommittees of the task force which was looking at some of the specifics?

**Mr Cleary:** It's my understanding that it was the Fair Tax Commission that was travelling.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** There are a number of commit-

tees which are subcommittees of the task force that have travelled, in terms of property taxation. I talked to the OFA, who were here yesterday, and it made some representation to the commission; I believe it was here in Toronto that it had made a submission. I'm not aware of the cancellation of the meeting. We certainly have been supportive as a ministry and I as an individual of reform in taxation on land, especially farm land. There's a need for it. We all know what the problems are with the farm tax rebate program, which we've talked about earlier. There is need for reform.

However, I want to correct a little. We're not directly involved in terms of the financing and reporting. The commission does not report to us; it reports to the Treasurer. Our involvement is somewhat restricted to having input as opposed to receiving the report. But I'm optimistic and hopeful that we'll get something that's useful, that we can get some reforms in property tax for farm land, because it's something that badly needs reforming.

**Mr Cleary:** Am I correct, then, that you tell me that the commission was not established by you and the Minister of Finance?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** No, it was just the Minister of Finance.

**Mr Cleary:** Oh. Your name was—

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Being used?

**Mr Cleary:** A few places that I had read, anyway.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I see here that one of our staff from the rural organization services acted as a facilitator in some of the rural areas for the meetings, but we did not set up or establish the commission.

**Mr Cleary:** They're blaming the wrong people, then. I believe you.

Did you want to answer my question about pesticides and land drainage? I just said I would welcome the minister's views of the commission's recommendation for pesticides, land drainage and farm income support programs.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Go ahead.

**Ms Rita Burak:** Mr Cleary, I think you're referring to the report of one of the subcommittees in relation to the Fair Tax Commission. I believe it did make some recommendations that touched on the use of pesticides by farmers. We received a copy of it, just as the farm organizations did. The subcommittee is an independent advisory group that provided advice to the government. I believe, Minister, we received feedback very quickly from the farm organizations expressing their disagreement with the recommendations, but to confirm, the ministry had no input into those recommendations. This was advice by an independent group of advisers to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr Cleary:** Does the minister agree with what that

group had suggested? Apparently, from what I read, they weren't happy with some of them.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** There were obviously some things in there that we don't agree with. I don't like to give a blanket yes or a blanket no, but we certainly know there were some things in there that we don't agree with either, and the producers very clearly signalled to us that they had some major concerns. We're not quite sure why some of the comments were being made when they're looking at taxation, why they were getting into some other areas. Some of the things that were said, we have some concerns with and in fact do not agree with. I don't want to make it a blanket yes or no, but we did have some concerns.

**Mrs Joan M. Fawcett (Northumberland):** Could I have a supplementary on that? In view of all the stories we hear on the Fair Tax Commission, that it really didn't work and it's kind of on the shelf, could the parts dealing with agriculture also be not looked at right now and just be on the shelf somewhere? Is that why you haven't really got a clear indication yet of how you feel about the various recommendations made? Do you feel the Fair Tax Commission will be revived, maybe even under some other name or something? Maybe there are just too many other things on the government's mind and agenda these days.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Certainly, it was a goal of the government to look at the taxation issue and try to implement a system, not just in land tax but some other things, to make taxes fairer in the province—

**Mrs Fawcett:** Right, because it's been hanging around for years.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, and that's a major goal to set for oneself. Given the current state of the economy and so on, in terms of concerns with deficit and already increasing taxes, it hasn't had maybe as high a priority as it might have had if times were better. It is something, though, that the government is still concerned about and committed to doing. I don't disagree with you that it would be nice if it could be—

**Mrs Fawcett:** It's sort of on a back burner right now.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** —moved more quickly on, but quite frankly, if you look at what has been said, a lot of people were able to identify the problems, inequities, in the taxation system and the unfairness when it comes especially to taxation on farm land. But unfortunately, we seem to be somewhat short on solutions as to what kind of taxes would replace them if you eliminate some that clearly are unfair.

That's where I would say that the commission and many of the people who presented have been not very good at coming up with the solutions. That's the tough part of it: If you're going to implement a fairer system, you need some ideas, and we haven't got as many ideas



and solutions as we would like in order to implement them.

But it's something that needs to be done and I very much would hope we do it in the agricultural area in terms of tax on farm land: address the concern around the farm tax rebate. Hopefully, we can move that; I would very much like to.

**1550**

**Mr Cleary:** I'd like to talk a little bit about the honey bee. As we all know, honey is a \$10-million industry in this province and the pollination service is about a \$600-million project to the fruit and vegetable industry. Mite infestation of bees has hampered their ability to pollinate four fifths of the crops of apples, peaches, cherries, pears, plums, prunes, strawberries, peppers and cucumbers, and I could go on. In fact, many people now accept that the mite infestation will remain a permanent menace for farmers.

Therefore, it was with some relief that the farmers learned that following the termination of its mite destruction program, the federal government had approved a chemical, and I think the name of it was fluvalinate, or something to that effect. Apparently, this chemical has been tested in the United States and has been proven to kill the mite without injury to the bee. Most recently, the province assumed full responsibility for controlling the pest.

While I am aware that the ministry has provided the beekeepers' association with a certain amount of money, I would like to know how else the minister will be ensuring a vibrant fruit and vegetable industry that may safely rely on healthy bees.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** You're right. We have provided some money in terms of support to the Ontario Beekeepers' Association to help them in terms of training them to be able to inspect their own hives. It's sort of a self-inspection. There is at least one chemical that's of some use to them. We certainly accept the fact that bees are important to the horticultural industry and we would have a tough time without them.

One thing we are going to do, and this is fairly imminent. Agriculture Canada has announced that it's going to lift the ban on the importation of US bees. That is a major concern to us in the province of Ontario. The American bees are well known to have different kinds of mites. As to the two main ones here that we are aware of, the varroa and the tracheal mite, we have some real concerns in Ontario if they lift that ban, which has been in place for some years to help us control the mites. We import bees from Australia and New Zealand, and we did from Hawaii at one time; I don't know whether we still import from Hawaii or not.

I am going to be protesting to the federal minister next week about the lifting of that ban. We are considering what action the Ontario government can take to

potentially stop those bees. I don't want this to be interpreted as an anti-trade issue or somehow against trade, but I am aware that if we allow this to happen and the mites are brought in with the American bees, we'll increase our problem, and it's going to hurt, as you mentioned, the horticultural industry significantly.

We are going to explore what options Ontario can take. I'll be talking to some of the other provincial ministers—I understand that Manitoba is now also objecting to the lifting of the ban—and I will try to get support from other provinces to ask the federal government to reconsider. If they don't, then I'm going to look at what we can do as a province. We'll have to canvass the support in the farm community, but I have some real concerns about bringing bees in which we know are more highly infested with mites than we have here.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Whatever that chemical was, is that effective against the diseases that the US bees would be bringing over? I know that was a real concern when the inspectors were cut out. I also wonder how successful your program was to train people.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Ken Knox is going to step up to the plate.

**Mr Ken Knox:** There are the two types of mites. The one that's of big concern is the tracheal mite, the little wee guy inside—

**Mrs Fawcett:** Yes, I remember that.

**Mr Knox:** —and it's not treatable, but as to the other mite that the minister referred to, the chemical that is available is effective on those. We have areas within the province where we have quarantine areas to try and keep the bee movement down, and that's another means, without going to the destruction and the use of the chemical, to control them. That's one of the issues the federal government is raising in response to our trying to keep the movement of American bees out.

**Mrs Fawcett:** The association was very proud of the fact that we were relatively clean here, and had been.

**Mr Knox:** That's right, yes, and still are relatively clean. We do have some quarantine areas, but for the most part bees can move throughout the province. There's a small area down in the peninsula where we don't allow bees to move and between you two there's a small area which is a quarantine area. But for the most part, the province is kept clean, thanks to the bee association, which has done good work and has been trained successfully, in answer to your further question.

**Mrs Fawcett:** They really have picked up the slack, then.

**Mr Knox:** Yes, indeed.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Probably because they are so committed. I remember meeting with them and they were a very committed bunch.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'd just add one thing in terms



of the US bee situation. We're also concerned with bringing in the Africanized bees, which are in the southern US, that we really don't think we have any need for here in Ontario. We not only might end up with mites; we may end up with that other strain of bee which would be very bad for Ontario. I just wanted to put that on the record as well, that we have some concerns on that. It's not an anti-US or an anti-trade issue; it's very much safety and health of the horticultural industry.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Paul Klopp):** Four minutes.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Just a question on the stable funding: I think you said on the 12th possibly you would be trying to bring it forward. Then I was alarmed when I read in the Star this morning that the final vote on Bill 48 could take place as early as next Tuesday, allowing the Legislature to recess for the rest of the summer shortly after. I was very worried then that this bill wouldn't be coming forward, and I guess I was going to say, will you make your House leader bring this forward? Unless he does, then we're really in jeopardy of not getting it in this session.

I know that certainly the OFA, the Canadian Farmworkers Union and the National Farmers Union want to see something happen, and maybe some not so enthusiastically, but I think they really want to know. When I just saw that, I wanted to ask again if you know anything more than we do.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I know that we're not going to be adjourning for the summer next week. My concern is, will we here in August working away as opposed to adjourning early? There is a lot of legislation the House leaders are looking at that they would like to get passed. From my perspective, I'm quite interested in staying here to get this bill dealt with and then some others.

**Mrs Fawcett:** So am I.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I don't think we have to worry about the Star column in terms of the House adjourning next week. It won't happen.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Okay. In April you told the members of the Silent Majority and the NFU that under Bill 42, if the farmer sent in a cheque to a farm organization but marked it for direct deposit back to the farmer on the back of the cheque, it would still qualify for a valid fee payment. Now, is that true, and if so, do you still agree with that? Just what is the clarification?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** There's a bit of a misunderstanding. I probably said something that led people to believe that, to say that. I think, in response to the question as it was put, which was put in a fairly detailed way, I said that we would be taking the cheque, registering the farmer and forwarding the cheque on to the farm organizations. We weren't as concerned about what was on the back of it perhaps as the general farm organizations would be.

Subsequently to that, we've talked to the farm organizations. Obviously, they are very concerned because of that story, if you will, that's out from the Silent Majority. We are now talking to the farm groups about how we prevent sort of deliberate foulup of the system. What we will probably do if the cheque is not—if you're asked to send in a cheque, it has to be something you can deposit, and we may be sending those cheques back if they're basically not negotiable. But we are discussing that with the farm organizations, as to how to handle that problem. I am not standing by that statement.

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**Mrs Fawcett:** So it's still up in the air.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** In the general farm organizations, there's some concern about deliberate sort of foulups. I don't want to call it fraud, but deliberately trying to mess up the system. We will try to put something in place that will prevent that from happening because it could end up costing the farm organizations money in terms of dealing with those kinds of cheques. We are having a discussion, and I did not mean to say that I would accept cheques that were not negotiable.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Are you going to the meeting Monday night for the Silent Majority?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'll be in Charlottetown Monday night, talking about safety nets and honey bees.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Your designate, Mr Klopp, maybe will be there?

**The Acting Chair:** No, I won't be.

Now we go to the PC Party from 4 to 4:20 and then the NDP from 4:20 to 4:40. Take it away, Ted.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I have a question to the minister. This is an article that was in the Wellington Advertiser last week. I'll read you the article, from Wellington OMAF News, which is distributed as a service by our local OMAF office.

"We have had a good response to the SEWAP program for vegetable growers." I don't know if you're familiar with the term, the SEWAP program? "This program could be continued for future years. It has been suggested that other commodity producers, ie, swine, dairy, poultry etc, petition their member of provincial Parliament to have this program extend to them. Approximately \$21,000 will be paid in this area to assist students with their summer wages."

Then it goes on and gives the telephone number.

I received a call just yesterday from a farmer in Peel township. I think—Wally Sander is his name—and he asked me if I would lend my support to this initiative, to extending this program to other commodity producers. I would just like to ask you in a preliminary sense, is there any reason why this program has just been strictly designated for certain farmers and excluding others, if there's any reasoning behind it, and

secondly, why is it that all farmers couldn't be eligible for this program?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Just let me be sure here. We're talking about the summer employment that we are providing?

**Mr Arnott:** Yes. SEWAP is their acronym.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Some support for hiring students in the summer, or part-time people in the summer? Because it's not a great amount of money—I mean, I would love to have many times what we have to OMAF—we decided to target it to the commodities that we thought were under the most distress, and horticulture, we believe, is under more stress in the province than, say, dairy producers. We have attempted to target it to those who I happen to believe are most in need of support, and they also are in need of hiring workers: Horticulture usually hires a lot of people in the summer for harvesting and planting etc.

So it is a targeted program as opposed to a general program. If we watered it down and just made it available to everybody, that would be universal. That would be nice, but I've tried, because I have a limited amount of money, to target it to those who I happen to believe need it most, and that is the answer that I would recommend that you give to the—

**Mr Arnott:** In past years there was a wage subsidy program for all kinds of students. In 1989 I think it was suspended. I think the gentleman made a very good point, that if indeed there's a program there for farmers it should be accessible to all farmers, and it makes it difficult.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I understand. I would support the concept of universality as well if I had sufficient money to spread across the entire province, but feeling I didn't have what I would like for this kind of program, I decided to target it. We haven't been able to deliver safety nets. I just met with a number of farm leaders. The horticulture sector is very much interested in a safety net, what they're calling an enhanced NISA program. We've not been able to deliver that to them. They haven't had much in the way of provincial support. This is a small amount of money we've been able to help the horticulture industry with, and it's to make up for some of our failings in providing safety nets.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey):** I'm here again today. Jim Wilson, one of our members, has asked me to put some things on the record and some things he's already brought up in the House. He understands that the minister hasn't had time yet in his busy schedule to get back to him, but he would like me to bring forward his concerns, which I will do, and I understand we have more time if I don't get it all on.

I'm going to read a letter that I think he gave to you, Mr Minister, and then we'll go on with this press release and things like that. It was to a Mr Patrick

Russell, and it says:

"Dear Members of the Committee:

"On behalf of the farming community in the town of New"—how do you say that?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Tecumseth.

**Mr Murdoch:** "Tecumseth, I write in response to some of the comments and options contained in the planning document entitled the Town of New Tecumseth Official Plan Draft Discussion Paper, revised February 17, 1993. Specifically, I want to make clear my support for the position taken by many of the constituents in the farming community to maintain the status quo by keeping the present agricultural-rural designation and policies as contained in the township of Tecumseth official plan. It is without hesitation that I extend my support for this position. I ask that your committee listen to and take seriously the concerns expressed by me and the farmers in New"—

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Tecumseth.

**Mr Murdoch:** Tecumseth. I get it wrong every time I look at it.

"It is my opinion that for far too long municipalities and governments at all levels have implemented laws and policies with little or no concern for the property rights of land owners and taxpayers." I can probably agree with that. "This is particularly true when you consider the"—this one's got me tongue-tied.

**Ms Haeck:** Tecumseth, probably.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Tecumseth was a great Mohawk warrior.

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes, I know he was.

"...the proliferate use of the so-called planning guideline issued by the provincial ministries of Agriculture and Food and the Environment."

*Interjection.*

**Ms Haeck:** Do you want me to hold your cue card after this?

**Mr Murdoch:** I was just listening to Paul over there.

"Guidelines are no replacement for laws that have been duly debated and passed by the Legislature of the province. Instead, I argue that guidelines merely signal the wishes of governments that have not got the guts to debate and pass laws for fear of public recrimination. None the less, it is the case that we are stuck with food land guidelines and reasonable use guidelines that, in many cases, are enforced by the provincial government as if they were laws. The problem is, of course, that while these guidelines make for good politics, they tend, more often than not, to ignore the economic and social effects of their implementation.

"For example, the governments of Ontario have long had as a goal the preservation of agricultural lands.



However, please keep in mind that these same governments have never moved to compensate farmers for restricting the use of agricultural lands."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Murdoch:** "In fact, just last year in the London annexation fiasco, the provincial NDP government effectively expropriated thousands of acres of farm land in Middlesex county without consideration or compensation to farmers."

I understand that somebody over there asked me a question, but I had to finish the paragraph. If you'd like me to finish, I will.

**Mr Paul Klopp (Huron):** Go ahead.

**Mr Murdoch:** That's good. "I've always maintained that prosperous farmers will jealously guard farm land, but the challenge of preserving agricultural land is compounded when you consider that most farmers are having a difficult time making ends meet, while at the same time their assets, primarily their land, are being devalued by overzealous planners who know little or nothing about operating a family farm."

I have to agree with that too. I didn't write this letter, but I agree with a lot of what's in it.

"The question before your committee, and subsequently before the town council, concerns the future designation of lands in the rural area of the town. To split the agricultural-rural designation, as suggested in the discussion paper, would have the effect of lowering the value of the farm. Needless to say, I am sure the local bank managers will want to re-examine their financial commitments to farmers if this split were to occur.

"Moreover, the authors of the discussion paper appear to place little value on the speculative value of farm land when they comment, on page 11, about the inflated values of farms. In many cases the only real value the farm has is contained in the speculative value of the land, and unless the town of New Tecumseth is prepared to compensate our farmers for the loss of this speculative value of their land, I suggest it is both immoral and unwise to change the status quo."

"The authors go on to suggest that devaluing farm land is a virtue because it will encourage younger farmers to get into the business of farming. I suggest the reasoning for this statement is illogical and, at best, naïve. Under the split scenario, it is agreed by the authors that the farms' value would decrease. It follows, then, that the farms' future viability is itself called into question. A drop in the speculative value of the farm land would effectively remove the saleability of the property.

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"Given the already very low net returns in the farming community and the added financial stress that would be caused by the devaluation of their lands, I ask

you, what younger farmer in his or her right mind would want to take over a farming operation? In other words, if the committee were to reject the status quo, I believe members would be guilty inadvertently of precipitating the elimination of family farms as we know them today in our area.

"In summary, the status quo must be maintained. The present agricultural-rural designation allows for other than agricultural uses of land. This flexibility must not be taken away from the farm land owner.

"Thank you for taking time to review my comments."

That was from Jim Wilson. Jim mentioned to me that he felt there hadn't been time yet for you to respond, but he felt I should read that into the record so that you will get a response. Now you know that I know about it. That's the first time I saw the letter, and I wanted to put it in for Jim.

I see that we still have 10 minutes.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Do you want me to answer that in the next 10 minutes?

**Mr Murdoch:** If you'd like to answer; if you don't, I have some other things I'd like to put in for Jim. I know we have another 20-minute shot, so I can always do that. Yes, if you'd like to have some comments, Mr Minister, I'd be the last one to not want to see you speak.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** First of all, let's respond to the London situation. This is not something that happened arbitrarily from this government. Negotiations have been going on for some 10 years, as I'm sure you're aware, between the city of London and the county of Middlesex and the townships therein. London was looking for some additional land, and this debate had been going on and on. Finally, the minister said, "Look, if you can't reach a settlement, we'll appoint someone who will examine the issue and make the recommendations and you'll both have to live with the recommendations." So it wasn't the NDP government that imposed this, it was an arbitrator who was set up, and everyone was aware that his recommendations would be brought in as the rule.

I share your view in that much agricultural land was brought into the city of London. It's a concern of mine as Minister of Agriculture and Food. We're looking at working with Middlesex, and London indeed, to try to make sure that land, which is good agricultural land and should continue to be so, will be protected. We're doing what we can to work with the local authorities as well as with Municipal Affairs. I wanted to straighten that out.

On the Tecumseth situation, the official plan is still very much in the preliminary stages. We have had staff and we've been commenting on the preliminary. First of all, we compliment the fact that they are bringing in an official plan and trying to put things in place.



However, it's difficult to maintain an agricultural-rural designation. I mean, it's either agriculture or it's not. That's why you have two different terms; I don't know how you can have both. A rural designation suggests you can have other kinds of severances and you can provide for housing and commercial and other kinds of things that can go into a rural designation, which you can't have in agriculture. It's a bit of an anomaly, in my view, to have it designated both. Why not just create a new designation and call it "open," do what you want with it.

**Mr Murdoch:** I've been accused of that many times in Grey.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I didn't make that accusation. I was just stating a viewpoint. I know it's tough. Having had that opportunity to have a dual designation, I can understand the frustration of the farmers and the people in the area who don't want to give it up. That's natural. But if we're going to have planning that means something and if we're going to do anything to preserve agricultural land, I think we have to decide what is good agricultural land and should be protected and what is rural and allowed to be developed. It's going to be a tough sell with the people in the area who've had that freedom in the past, but our job is to try to preserve the good agricultural land and allow other land to be developed.

I think we can get this worked through. I realize some things have been said in terms of farm land being affordable. I think it should be. Farmers should not have to compete with developers when they want to buy a farm, because what it's worth as farm land and land for houses obviously is quite different. Farmers can't afford, with today's prices, to be paying developer prices for farm land; that's a fact. If it's zoned agriculture, clearly the land would be cheaper and the opportunities for young people would be better in terms of getting a better price. I don't think that's necessarily bad, unless you're the person who happens to be selling the farm. If I'm the one who wants to retire and sell the farm, then obviously I'm going to be concerned.

We have to accept that, that some people are not going to like having that dual designation taken away. We know there are going to be some people who aren't going to be happy, and I've talked to Mr Wilson about the fact that it's going to be tough to continue to maintain the status quo, but I think we do have get on with planning, and I again commend Tecumseth for trying to get into an official plan and get on with planning.

**Mr Murdoch:** I want to make quite clear too that Jim Wilson would have liked to be here today. He was called home to a special matter up there and he couldn't come; sometimes that happens.

I might argue a bit with you on the London annexation. The only reason I won't argue with you too long

is that it's over, but if it hadn't been over right at this point, I would almost have to say that the NDP government did do this. I know there were ongoing relationships between the two and they didn't seem to get together. But as you probably know, I spoke in the House that I didn't agree with the way you did it; I think there were other ways and better ways. I went through annexation in my own area; we were, to a point, forced to negotiate by the government of the day, but we did come to an agreement that we both could live with and there wasn't the dissatisfaction that there seems to still be down in the London area. I know there are a lot of people upset.

I have concerns. I know that you, as the minister, will work hard to see that the good agricultural land is preserved, but I feel that the pressures of development, once that land has been put into the city of London—the excuse is going to be, "It's in the city now; it should be used," and that's some of our best farm land. You can see the same problem, and I've brought it to your attention in the House, in what's happening outside of Toronto, out of Brampton, when I delivered the presents I gave you some time ago, the good earth and the things that are being devoured.

I see that every day. I'll be going home in a couple of hours from now, and I'll drive by that same subdivision that is on some of the best farm land in Ontario. I know the excuse is probably used that it's already been annexed by the town of Brampton and it's serviced and stuff like that, "So hey, let's let it go." I'm just afraid that will happen in London. But as I say, I know you'll do your best to see it doesn't, and I guess we'll have to wait and see what history brings to us.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I want to respond to that very briefly, because we dealt with that in the House. A quick comment is that the houses springing up on some of that good farm land on the urban fringe in a number of cities is land that was rezoned and changed maybe 10, 18, whatever years ago. It's been sitting there growing corn, but it's been zoned residential and waiting for the right time for the houses to spring up. With the decisions we're making today in trying to help some of these municipalities in terms of zoning, hopefully the people won't be saying things like that about us in 10 years, that we just let all this land go into residential, so what we're deciding today will protect us in the future.

**Mr Murdoch:** We hope. It didn't work out there, and I'm sure a lot of the people elected back then are not around now; maybe that's part of the reason they're not around here any more. But they made that mistake then and allowed that land, and I'm just saying that London now has taken a big chunk and I'm really concerned about that land 10 years from now, starting to put high-rises or whatever, spread housing.

I see we've got another couple of minutes. Just one

thing, and I'll go back to Jim's later on; I know we have another 20-minute time, and his is too long. Someone asked me in the hallway coming just down here: "You've got a question for Elmer. I wish you'd ask him what's happening to the tripartite system with the beef." In my area, I know there's some in it, but not a lot. I guess there are some problems, are there? Maybe you can explain it to me. If you can't, I understand, but is there a problem with that system, or what's happening?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Because of the countervail situations we've seen in terms of pork, the beef producers are concerned that they may fall victim to countervail activities from the US as well, so they're nervous about this tripartite for red meat and whether or not it's countervailable. They are somewhat anxious to get out of this, terminate the program and set up something else. They have some ideas. They're looking now at a value added income stabilization account, known as VAISA, which is a hybrid of NISA and that income stabilization account.

That's what they are now asking for, and they've asked me to take that request to the ministers in Charlottetown next week to see if we can get support across the province to terminate, wrap up the tripartite for red meats at the end of this year and start a new program. So we will be taking that issue to Charlottetown to talk to other provinces and the federal government to see if they're interested.

**Mr Murdoch:** Okay, I'll leave it in your capable hands to look after us.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** That concludes your time, Mr Murdoch. Just by way of information, the Conservatives have another round of questions commencing in 20 minutes' time.

**Mr Murdoch:** I'd just like to thank Christel for her help, but the help from Paul Klopp didn't help me any.  
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**Mr Peter North (Elgin):** I would just like to ask the minister a few different questions. As the minister well knows, the area that I come from is southwestern Ontario. We have an abundance of people in the tobacco industry, people who rely quite heavily on the tobacco industry as a source of revenue and as a source of employment.

In the most recent budget there was a line that spoke to the issue of clear fuel. In the tobacco industry, the people who do not have access to natural gas use clear fuel in the curing process of tobacco. This is something that, to my understanding, will incur a 14% increase in tax on that particular fuel.

I was wondering if you as Minister of Agriculture and Food are speaking to the Minister of Finance or dealing with the Minister of Finance to put across our particular question on that issue to the minister. If so,

being that we perceive it to be sort of sectoral, very specific hardship, is there some opportunity for waiving that particular tax on those people or some sort of certificate that they could get or something of that nature that would give them a rebate of some description?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** My understanding is that the Ministry of Finance is reviewing that subject. But Len Roozen, the director of the policy analysis branch, who's done a lot of work, I would like to add, on ethanol, but didn't get a chance to respond to the ethanol question yesterday—Len, could you respond to that? You're certainly very familiar with it.

**Mr Len Roozen:** Thank you, Mr Minister and members. I guess the issue there is that the recent budget has a line in it which allowed for the differentiation of coloured fuel so that the tax-exempt portion of the fuel could be distinguished from the taxable portion of the fuel. The issue here is that in curing tobacco that coloured fuel, the tax-exempt portion of the fuel, may well leave some residual which has an implication for the tobacco product.

The Ministry of Finance has been apprised of that problem and has been speaking with us, and now with itself—I guess what was the Ministry of Revenue—to establish whether there are other administrative ways of separating that tax-exempt fuel from the taxable fuel so that the coloration issue will not be a problem for the tobacco belt. We spoke with them yesterday and we expect to hear an answer back from them shortly, but they are sensitive to the problem and are prepared to seek out other administrative solutions.

**Mr North:** I just hope that the minister and the ministry realize that there is an urgency to this particular question, because quite obviously the tobacco industry is engaged in growing tobacco now and will soon be engaged in curing tobacco. I hope that we can get it cleared and clarified with the Ministry of Finance so that we don't end up with this problem lingering into the curing part of the harvest and incurring costs that they will in turn have to try to get back or have rebated at some point in the future.

If I could, I'd like to ask another question. My second question has to do with another for instance in my particular area.

**Mr Klopp:** Where do you get these questions?

**Mr North:** Out of my head. Last year, as you would well know, all over the province there were difficulties in agriculture, but in our particular area, a group that was involved with the Women's Farm Network set up, with a group of United churches, a crisis help line for farmers. They came to me a number of different times and spoke to me about some type of funding or some type of resources from the ministry to help them out with this particular issue.



Do you know if we have anything in the budget this year that would help groups of this nature? Second to that, are we working on any particular position from the ministry that would help these groups deal with the issues that come to light on the crisis help lines?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I'm going to get staff to answer the specifics. Ken, I guess you volunteered. One thing I would add is that the Women's Farm Network—we value what they're doing in rural Ontario. It's a fairly new organization, and that's not knocking any of the organizations that have been around for a long time. They are a fairly active and fairly aggressive group that is out there working on behalf of family farms and the farm family. We are looking at possibly some ways of supporting them, not just in this endeavour. In terms of the specifics of your question, I'm going to let Ken Knox answer.

**Mr Knox:** The emergency assistance program of last year was a result of the culmination of two things that occurred. One was the very bad weather last spring and early summer and further low prices. The commodity council, particularly the grains and oilseeds industry, brought to the minister's attention that we needed some emergency relief. Part of that was to deal with the family crisis that was occurring in parts of rural Ontario because of the very difficult financial situation that farm families were in.

That brought about an assistance program for farmers, but particularly a component which was set aside to deal with the family crisis and counselling. Organizations within communities were invited to send in sort of a tender as to what they might do to assist the farm families in their communities. Some supplemented welfare for areas where farmers may not be eligible to do that, and other organizations, such as the one that you've cited, set up some system to provide crisis relief or crisis assistance and phone networking and so on. So that's the background and the program that was in place last year.

Fortunately, there was an opportunity at the end of the fiscal year, with some money still remaining in that fund, for organizations to agree if they wanted some funding for this year, and we were able to make arrangements for them to have funding. For the organizations that wanted to, at the beginning of April, there were funds set aside for them to carry on their work at least through the summer.

At this point, there isn't long-term funding available for the crisis aspect, but it would be our hope that under the rural economic development aspect, if organizations were looking for some funding to do these kinds of non-profit work, the parameters would be broad enough to include that. Certainly it was an excellent program that some organizations took on.

**Mr Klopp:** I'm sorry Len got back to his chair there. With the coloured fuel issue that the treasury

changed, there has been the odd farmer who has talked to me and said he doesn't want to go to coloured fuel, for whatever reason. I think way back when we first went to coloured fuel, there was a bit of a mixup and some guys got scared with their diesel fuel tractors.

I was just wondering, since you're dealing with them on this issue, the tobacco, is it only the tobacco itself with regard to the fuel issue, or can I bring this up to your attention now with regard to some of these farmers who don't want to go to coloured fuel, for whatever reason?

**Mr Roozen:** My understanding is that the issue of coloration of fuel generally is not under consideration for change, but if there are implications as a result of the implications of the colorant itself on particular crops, they are prepared to look at alternative solutions. But I don't think they would limit themselves to tobacco in that regard.

**Mr Klopp:** This is actually to do with tractors themselves, the vehicle. I guess before he could get a rebate, he had non-coloured fuel to get the rebate. The change the other day with the treasury department I believe was more of administration. You just have to get coloured fuel. But it's been brought to my attention. I just was wondering if any other farmers had got to you on this issue. Is there anything we can do about it?

**Mr Roozen:** The discussion has focused on the topic of tobacco, but I will raise the issue of the other commodities when we next speak to the Ministry of Finance.

**Mr Klopp:** It's just strictly with tractors. I'll talk to you later.

**The Vice-Chair:** I recognize once again Mr North.

**Mr North:** I'm sorry to ask the minister so many questions, but—

**Mr Klopp:** These are good questions, though.

**Mr North:** —there are a lot of people out there in our particular area who have a lot of questions—

**Mrs Fawcett:** If you're that sorry, I'll take your place.

**Mr North:** —and look to our ministry and a number of other ministries to be of some service.

A question that was asked of me a short time ago, at a gathering of all different commodity groups, was a question that dealt with fish farming. It was not so much, "What is the ministry doing for people in the fish farming industry?" but, "Does the ministry take any interest in helping to market fish farming or market the products of fish farming, and are we looking at any sort of export opportunities for the people who are in that particular industry?"

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**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We have tried to assist them in terms of some of the trade missions that we've had, in



terms of export and in terms of marketing. There was a trout producers' co-op that wound up operations about a month or six weeks ago that experienced financial difficulty. They were trying to come together in order to market their product jointly to try and get a little bit more clout in the marketplace. That operation fell apart.

In terms of responding to the fish farming, one of the things we are doing which will be part of our initiatives in livestock diversification is that we have been talking to the Ministry of Natural Resources about allowing other species to be farmed. We know there are something like three species being farmed here in Ontario and in some parts of Europe and there are as many as 40 different species being farmed, and it's an opportunity for income in rural Ontario. It might provide in some cases not necessarily a full farm income, but it would be something that a number of people could be involved in on a small scale, and it would employ people as well.

We are looking at how we can urge the Ministry of Natural Resources to increase the number of species we can have in fish farms, because it's very restrictive now; we're probably the most restrictive in the world. There's opposition, I would add quickly though, from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which does not want to see the list expanded. But as a ministry, we believe that it's an opportunity we shouldn't lose, because we are in need of additional income in rural Ontario and it would be an opportunity for people to get into fish farming with some other species for which there is a market.

There are people who bring things like channel cats right into downtown Toronto. They bring them all the way from the US. Channel cats are being brought in and sold in downtown Toronto. We can grow channel cats in a lot of the swamps we have in this province. That would be a good way to make some income from some of the wetlands that we're trying to protect. So there are some opportunities and things we're trying to do to assist the fish farming industry.

**Ms Haeck:** Just a quick supplementary on that issue: You indicated that the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has some objection to expanding the list of species that could be produced or raised in this way. What are their specific objections?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Ken, I think, has volunteered.

**Ms Haeck:** Ken gets volunteered a few times.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yes, I have to be careful. I'm liable to say the wrong thing. Ken will give a good answer.

**Mr Knox:** It's an interesting position that they're putting forward, comparing the animals and the diversification of the exotic animals, the deer farming as compared to fish. There's good logic there if you work your way through it, and I will attempt to. Animals can be compounded. They can be kept within fences. The

issue with fish is that they're very difficult to do that to, particularly if we have them in an open body of water. Similarly, even if they're in ponds that are confined and away from creeks or rivers, they can escape through birds of prey that can pick them up and drop them in a river or creek.

The difficulty there is bringing in non-native species which could then cause great harm if they got into the wild, and the difficulty for the industry is to ensure that we can keep the fish from getting into the wild environment. That's the situation and why they're suggesting that they don't want to introduce new species here. What we're attempting to be able to demonstrate is that we can provide the security that would allow farmers to introduce these new species. That's the issue, I believe.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** The other thing is that there really is a big hangup on disease, that the fish which are put into the concentrated environment, where you want to keep more fish in a smaller pond, if you will, that you increase the likelihood of disease, and through the water exchange that Ken refers to, you add diseases. There's a real concern every time we hear "fish farming," that they're going to add diseases to the natural environment, so they simply oppose, sort of a flat blanket opposition to fish farming.

The other thing they believe in quite strongly is they like to go out and fish in the lake with a pole and a line, and that's how you should get your fish, not go down to the supermarket and buy it.

**Ms Haeck:** Well, some of us who don't like to go out and fish might actually like to see some diversity. I can't tell you the last time I went fishing. It was many, many years ago, and it's not my kettle of fish. I'd much rather go out to the store and buy it.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Haeck:** Yes, it might be true.

**The Vice-Chair:** Any other questions from the government caucus? You have five minutes left in this round.

**Mr Klopp:** The member from all the farmers in Riverside.

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** Windsor-Walkerville.

**The Vice-Chair:** Any further questions from the government caucus?

**Mr Klopp:** He's doing such a good job, what can we say about him?

**The Vice-Chair:** Mrs Fawcett, would you like to fill the additional five minutes in this round?

**Mrs Fawcett:** Yes, okay. If I could refer to the estimates book on page 85, I just have a couple of questions from the book here that I would like to clarify. I know there are probably absolutely excellent reasons.

The wages and salaries, if you look at the top line there, have increased, and then the employee benefits have decreased. I'm just trying to get that computed in my head properly, because normally they go hand in hand and one doesn't increase and the other one decrease. I wonder if I could have an explanation.

**Ms Burak:** I can get started. The salary increase would relate to this fiscal year's calculation of the collective agreement. I believe it was a 2% increase.

The reason for the reduction in employee benefits might be that overall there are fewer people, or it might have something to do with the fact that we did have a reorganization within the ministry and there may have been fewer benefit dollars required for this total vote and item, but we can get you the detail on that. But for certain the increase relates to the only—

**Mrs Fawcett:** Well, that one is fairly easily understood, but it's just, you know, to have such a decrease from last year in the benefits.

**Ms Burak:** It may have been that in this particular set of branches they might have had an overly rich benefits budget, and we're catching up with the reality of how many people are actually on the payroll this year.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Then, if you take the first page past 107, it starts at 1 again, the summary. Now, under "Operating," I guess it's the first four items there—ministry administration, agricultural and rural services, food industry development and education, research and laboratory services—there certainly has been a substantial decrease there, about \$54 million, ballpark figure, and then if you go to ministry agencies, there's quite a major increase there.

It almost looks like the ministry is being disbanded and everything moved off into separate agencies where those people would be appointed, and I'm just wondering—I don't like to say it—is it creative bookkeeping, where then that expense looks like it has been taken away from the budget and just transferred over to something else, like some agency where it looks like you've really, on the one hand, saved money, but really it's still on somebody's books.

1640

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We believe that is money that actually went to farmers.

**Mrs Fawcett:** That's good news.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Yesterday, I think it was, the last day we talked about AgriCorp—

**Mrs Fawcett:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** —which would be seen as an agency in terms of the GRIP and NISA payments, I think, which has increased and been kicked in in terms of NISA, which we're putting money into this coming year, we believe that is a separate agency which flows currently through the crop insurance concept. But

AgriCorp is going to be a separate agency.

**Mrs Fawcett:** So AgriCorp would fit under the ministry agencies then.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** To put the word "AgriCorp" there, that would be an agency, yes.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Okay.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** When we get it set up, then it will be accurate.

**Mrs Fawcett:** I see.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We can say the money was sent to AgriCorp, whereas now we're operating as if there was an AgriCorp.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Right, okay. All right, I think I more or less understand.

Then I must as well just stay right in the book. Page 91: Minister, do you believe that the attendance really will rise this year at the museum? I guess, having been in education, and I know the constraints that education is going to be under, and the cutbacks, with school boards being cut back so heavily, will the school trips take place? Because it's a fair increase, you know, with the numbers, the actual and the estimated.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Are you referring to the numbers across the top in terms of the estimated attendance in school programs?

**Mrs Fawcett:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Norris Hoag is the expert when it comes to colleges and museums. I would note, though, it's lower than the 1991-92 actual in terms of numbers. Anyhow, Norris has the answer, I'm sure.

**Mr Norris Hoag:** The proposal here is that the museum has been very creative in working out new programs. They are actively trying to work with the local school boards to develop new programs that will bring students in. I think that's the reasoning behind the increase that has been indicated there. The director at the museum has been working with the surrounding boards to tie into their outdoor education programs and has been making offers to the boards to have that happen.

I think the boards have been relatively receptive to it now because those programs have been very expensive for them to operate. So it's a very good opportunity for the ministry and for the agricultural community to expose young people to agricultural awareness so that they are aware of food production systems.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Oh, don't get me wrong. I think they're marvellous. I agree wholeheartedly that they should go, and I hope that you're right, that the schools will be able to make use of that facility. But the actual for 1992-93 was 38,000, and then you're predicting 43,000. Oh my, I hope that's true.

**Mr Hoag:** There has been a gradual incline of participation at the museum, and it's not just a visit to



the museum. In fact we have worked with educators, we have established participatory programs where the students, when they arrive there, have very definite assignments. The teachers work along with them in small groups. We have people in period costume to work with the students. We have a school room there that was moved from just slightly west of the current site, as a matter of fact, and the students participate in a classroom exercise as they might have when that school was an active situation.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Well, then, what we'll have to do is petition the Minister of Education and Training not to cut back on all of the transportation money etc, to allow these students to make use of this wonderful place.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you very much. Five minutes turned into ten minutes, so you may owe the Tories five minutes. Just keep that in mind later on. Go ahead, Mr Arnott.

**Mrs Fawcett:** They're easy to get along with.

**Mr Arnott:** Minister, I have a question and it concerns your livestock inspection branch. We've been talking about this earlier this week.

I had a constituent by the name of Frank Meyer, who is the proprietor of a firm called Meyer Meats in Wellington county near Guelph, who has come to me, and Monday morning on my way down to Toronto, I dropped in to see him. He's got a small abattoir—a meat-packing plant, in other words—which employs I think his two sons; it's a small family business.

They've been in contact with me on a number of occasions in the last few months, concerning new regulations that are coming into force with respect to these abattoirs. I guess in the past some of these small abattoirs have been exempt from licensing and your ministry has endeavoured to licence them all, in response to some concerns that were expressed through the auditor, I believe.

I agree that we should have regulation to ensure the quality and the safety of our food supply and our meat supply certainly, but I wonder about the degree of regulation. As our party's small business advocate, I'm concerned about small business, if the degree of government regulation is so excessive that it drives people out of business. I believe that the government regulations should not be so onerous such that small-scale operation of just about any enterprise is impossible. I think that small-scale operations should be allowed.

Most recently, the ministry sent Mr Meyer a questionnaire, 66 pages of questions, as to what was going on in his meat plant. I felt that when I looked at it, and he showed it to me, it appeared to be excessive regulation. I wondered what the importance of having information to that degree available to the ministry—of what utility that would be. I know he was very, very concerned about it, and I've brought this to your attention

verbally and in writing. I'd like you to answer those concerns.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** When you mentioned this to me verbally in another venue, I didn't have the answer, and I made sure we had Charlie Lalonde, who is the meat inspection director, with us today, who can give us the rationale.

**The Chair:** Welcome, Mr Lalonde. Please introduce yourself and your colleague.

**Mr Charles Lalonde:** Charlie Lalonde, director of meat industry inspection branch, which was previously the livestock inspection branch. I have with me Dr Tom Baker from the meat industry branch as well; he's the program manager.

I'd like to refer the answer to Dr Baker because he did communicate with Mr Meyer this week and last week as well. He'll provide you with the information.

**Dr Tom Baker:** Yes, actually we had consultation sessions with Mr Meyer and a group of processors in his neighbourhood back when we were developing our regulations and we certainly value the input he gave us at that time. I was speaking to him earlier this week about this particular issue.

Unfortunately, in the meat processing industry, government regulations are a reality and the province is not entirely alone on this. There are many other food safety agencies at the federal level and municipal that we have to deal with. In this particular case, our branch has developed a plant profile and this, I guess, would be the 66-page document you referred to. It was not seen so much as a regulatory device as in fact a consultative extension service type device.

Many of these small plants such as Mr Meyer's don't have the resources to have a quality control department, for instance, and they're concerned about issues of multi-agency inspection, the federal Health and Welfare people coming in and so on. In order to assist them, we had our meat scientists and other experts in our branch develop a protocol that would allow a plant to kind of develop its own quality control procedures and be able to actually in the long run and medium term do with less inspection than they're perhaps receiving now and having more protection for the consumer, because the process in this case would be running their own show to a greater extent than perhaps now. We would still maintain the service that we have, but in terms of the processing of meat.

One thing that was an issue perhaps here is this was a plant profile that was developed for the entire province and obviously Mr Meyer's operation is not as large as some of the other provincially inspected abattoirs and processing plants, so many of those 66 pages will not be appropriate in his particular situation.

**Mr Arnott:** He indicated to me, and I certainly accept what he said, that his approval rating was



something like 95% the last time his plant was inspected.

**Dr Baker:** Yes.

**Mr Arnott:** I assume that's 95% out of 100%.

**Mr Lalonde:** That's correct.

1650

**Mr Arnott:** That's quite high. He'd run a pretty good operation. I'm sure if you talk to him you'd find that his input would be very constructive. That's what I found from him too. I understood from him, and I don't know if this is the message he received, that if he didn't fill out the form, there's a chance his licence would be revoked. Is that correct?

**Mr Lalonde:** No, I don't think so. The instructions that went out to our staff were to document the procedures in the plant when they were finished with the slaughtering activity. As you know, during the summer period the slaughter level dips, so we did have inspection time available at each of the plants to do the documentation for the plant owner.

First of all, Mr Meyer himself doesn't have to fill it out. Secondly, it's not a licensing issue, but we will be sharing the information with the public health units across the province so that we can ensure there's not a duplication of inspection in the future, so that only the licensed inspector will conduct the activity on behalf of the health units and the Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr Arnott:** Fair enough. Perhaps I did misunderstand him, so I need that qualified in that sense.

I think you would agree it's important that a small-scale operation of this sort of enterprise should not be ruled out because of excessive government regulation.

**Mr Lalonde:** No. That is a principle that we've recognized in the licensing of exempt operators.

**Mr Arnott:** In the letter you received from the ministry, it indicated that one of the reasons the plant profile policy was being extended was federal legislation that might be forthcoming. Could you indicate to me what sort of federal legislation may be forthcoming that would require this?

**Mr Lalonde:** That's correct. Health and Welfare Canada has indicated that every food processing establishment in Canada should have a document relating to good manufacturing practices, and that it would be legislating, within the next year and a half, mandatory record-keeping for all food processors.

We have currently a memorandum of understanding signed with Health and Welfare so that we conduct the auditing in provincially licensed plants so that there's not a duplication of inspection. It's our understanding that with the documents being completed at each of the plants, all of our 300 licensed plants in Ontario would be in full compliance at the moment the legislation would come into effect.

**Mr Arnott:** I guess the observation I would make, though, is that we're into a period where the federal government is almost at the end of its mandate legally and we're likely to have a federal election this fall. There could be a new government coming in. There will be a new cabinet, I expect, no matter who wins the election. There's the possibility that the government's priorities may change. I would question maybe, the thought that we might be a little premature in terms of anticipating what the federal government may be doing in terms of legislation in the next year, given the fact that there's going to be an election.

**Mr Lalonde:** That's one consideration from our standpoint. There were significant food safety concerns: for example, people who are making ready-to-eat smoked sausages or are using exotic species to make ready-to-eat products. We felt we were covering the liability of the plant owners by making them aware of those risks. Despite the federal agenda, each plant owner will benefit from this process.

**Mr Arnott:** You indicated earlier there was some sort of public meeting, or a meeting of the abattoir owners some time ago to discuss some of these issues, and that took place—

**Mr Lalonde:** There were several meetings. Our primary vehicle for consultation is through the Ontario Independent Meat Packers and Processors Society, which represents over 100 slaughter plants in Ontario. There are 300 licensed facilities right now, so it leaves another 200 that are totally unstructured in terms of consultative process. But in the case of Mr Meyer, we did meet approximately a year and a half ago at his abattoir with predominantly Wellington county abattoir owners to discuss regulatory issues, and as a result of that meeting, we considered changes to our regulations to accommodate some of their valid concerns.

**Mr Arnott:** Did you have another question?

**Mr Murdoch:** Just on the same topic, I know that some time ago there was a problem with an abattoir in my riding, or supposedly a problem. I brought the problem to Elmer's attention and it got looked after, but since then the same person has been told that since it's such a small operation, the inspectors don't really want to be bothered going out to inspect him, and they were going to close him down. He's brought that to my attention. I think you'll remember which one it was, but if you don't I can always do that again. But that's what he's been told now by the inspector, that he's too small to be bothered with.

That's bad to be out there, and I know that shouldn't happen, and I hope you keep an eye on things like that.

**Mr Lalonde:** Our inspection unit is half-day blocks, so we allocate half days to any operator, and we have several who are on a half-day schedule. What we did was that of all the plants in Ontario, we reviewed the

number of hours that they had been allocated and some of them, for example, would be slaughtering two or three head, and they were allocated a full day. We brought those plants down to a half-day unit so that the same inspector can do two small facilities in the same day.

All of the exempt operators were given ample opportunity to come under inspection and we're satisfied that over 40 of them did come on the licence program. I'm not aware of anyone being denied service.

**Mr Murdoch:** I'll see that Elmer gets the—

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Let me just add one point here, because we moved basically to upgrade and make sure that all plants were in fact licensed and inspected. You would recall, I'm sure, that the Provincial Auditor said that we had so much slippage or there was money that was being spent on inspectors that was being wasted. I'm sure you'll remember things being said about that. This was somewhat in response to not paying inspectors for a full day when they were only needed for an hour or two.

It has made it somewhat inconvenient that they have to schedule their kills to suit the inspection so that they don't have to have a full day. I think that's fair and reasonable. It's something that smaller plants obviously can live with, but it is a way of our saving money by decreasing some of the availability of inspectors and not just making it open-ended.

**Mr Murdoch:** I'm all for saving money and there's no problem with that. I just don't want anyone to be cut off because they are small, and it does make it difficult to get there. Hopefully, somewhere along the line you'd try to work out a solution with them.

**Mr Lalonde:** All of our licensed facilities have at least half a day of inspection per week, and then we have some that are seasonal and we allocate them extra time in the fall, when there's greater activity taking place.

**Mr Murdoch:** Just one quick one then: What are we doing with the Mennonites? I just came into this question sort of late, but there's been some problem. As you know, the Mennonites, in our area especially, do a lot of custom killing of chickens, but they can't refrigerate, because they don't have any electricity.

I think some time ago, Mr Minister, you mentioned to me that there were some problems with some plants in our area, and I'm sure some of them might have been some of the Mennonites, because we have a lot in some parts of my riding, and then further on down into Ted's and further on down again to Kitchener. Are we going to work on that problem? We do have a bit of a problem there. I don't know where you're at on it. I haven't had any complaints lately. I did have some concerns from some of them come into my office. I'll let you talk that out.

**Dr Baker:** Yes, that was certainly an issue during the consultation period that we had to think through. We have licensed, I believe, two plants at this point that are owned by Mennonite operators of the traditional Mennonite-Amish background. They have been able to get around the refrigeration requirement, in some cases by bringing ice in. In other cases, the well water was so cold that they were very, very close to being able to maintain the refrigerated internal temperature of the product. So there have been ways we've accommodated them. We expect to be licensing other poultry plants in the next period that are operated by Mennonites.

1700

**Mr Murdoch:** Okay. As long as you're working on the problem. That's fine, thanks.

**The Chair:** That's it? You have a couple of more minutes, but if you want to—

**Mr Arnott:** I'd just like to make one additional observation to the minister.

When I first was made aware of the concerns of the meat packers—there were about 20 of them who came to my office one evening before the House came back. I thought there were going to be a handful coming and word got around that there was a public meeting, I think, and they were all there. I listened to their concerns and I still think there might be some benefit to having some sort of a consultation meeting so that they can voice their concerns in our area with respect to some of the new regulations, and perhaps some of the problems relating to misunderstanding and so on. I think there would be some benefit to that and I would ask you to give consideration to that sort of a format.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Okay. We can probably talk further about that.

We were aware when we got into this that we were basically, I think, if my memory is reasonable, around 92, or somewhere in that neighbourhood, plants operating in the province that were exempt. They were not being inspected, they were not licensed and when you move to correct that situation, obviously there are going to be some people who are concerned. But I would say that the staff have tried to work it through and consult. We've tried to move slowly and we've also provided assistance. We've got another \$1.4 million in capital assistance to help some of the people who can get up to standard so that they can be licensed and inspected.

We're trying to use the carrot and the stick here in terms of regulating and providing some assistance to get them upgraded. It's true there are some concerns and difficult situations out there, but I think that with staff and with the money we have for capital assistance, we're trying to do the best we can and maintain the consumer confidence in the meat industry, because that was the major concern we had.

I certainly was nervous about saying to that many



people who were sort of in business that they would no longer be able to continue as an unlicensed, uninspected plant, but I think we've been able to do it by just taking our time and trying to provide some support.

**Mr Murdoch:** Yes. I just want to mention that some of those people at Ted's were from Grey too and they have concerns there. You may have some more slaughterhouses start up because of the shift in the stockyards with the sheep and stuff like that now that they may have to sell somewhere else, so you may have some problems there.

**Mr North:** I wanted to ask the minister another question. It's a difficult question because it's kind of a double-edged sword. In our particular area, a number of the different fruit growers and some of the tobacco people have come and talked to me about moves they've heard with regard to the federal government cutting back on or limiting the availability of offshore help. To be blunt, their concerns are that they won't be able to get their crops harvested. They don't, for whatever reason, and it's disappointing, feel they can get it done with local help and they feel very strongly about it.

I wonder if there's anything you could tell us today that is happening within the ministry, or discussions that have taken place at some point during the time you've been minister? First of all, are you aware that the federal government has any intentions to do this? Second to that, if they do, is there something we're doing as a ministry to try and help alleviate those local concerns?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I've met with the producers a number of times, and when I meet with the producers who use offshore labour they always make the case how important it is for that offshore labour, because it's dependable and they have depended on those people coming. I'm not aware of any cancellation. I believe the program is sort of not being expanded; it's sort of frozen at the current level so it's not expanding, but whether or not it's contracting—I think I've got a staff person here who could probably answer this better than I. Len Roozen, I think you have drawn the straw on this one.

**Mr Roozen:** Thank you. There's no understanding on our part that the federal government has made any moves to curtail access to offshore workers under the foreign worker program. In fact my understanding is that the arrangements have been made for the supply of this year's labour and that the program continues to operate as always. If we were to understand that there were some efforts in that regard, we would certainly take steps to discuss with Ottawa what the implications of that would be for the fruit and vegetable growers in the province.

The organization that sponsors the arrival of the offshore workers, the farms program, has taken some

great steps to try to improve the supply of workers and reduce the cost of the program itself by undertaking to establish its own travel arrangements, which in the past would have been handled commercially, and has been successful at reducing its costs and securing more certainty as to the arrangements. To our knowledge, there has been no move in that regard, and if we are to find out that there is, we'll take steps to see what can be done to alleviate the implications for the farm community.

**Mr North:** I have another question.

**The Chair:** We have no other speakers from your caucus, so go right on. You've got five or six minutes.

**Mr North:** My second question has to do with conservation authorities, and it's too bad that Mr Murdoch and Mr Arnott stepped out of the room for a moment.

**Mr Klopp:** They'll be back.

**Mr North:** I know it's a hot topic at this point right now. The conservation authorities, through the blueprint document that they have discussed, have pinpointed our particular ministry as one that they see some duplication in, in terms of delivering services at the local level. The self-proclaimed senior PA, Mr Klopp, and I had an opportunity to meet with some members of the conservation authorities and they identified this to us and said that they felt there was some duplication that could be alleviated by conservation authorities delivering services.

My question to the minister is, because I know you've met with the Minister of Natural Resources, is there someone in the ministry who's trying to identify what it is that the conservation authorities are pointing at and if in fact it is duplication? If it is, is there a way that this particular service can be delivered better?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I have, as I'm sure you have, met with my local conservation authorities. I suspect every member from the House who has conservation authorities has met with them in their ridings. I've also met with some of the provincial people and they've made the case that there was duplication, and it's not a difficult thing to convince another person that there is overlap and duplication. Due to the fact that there have been significant restraints in their transfer dollars, they are looking for ways of taking on, in my view, some responsibilities on behalf of the province, and they're looking at how they can help us as a government to cut down and eliminate the duplication. I'm aware of that.

I have committed to working with the ministers of Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs and Environment and Energy in terms of how we can work together, because those ministries are all involved in rural Ontario, along with our own of course, and we need to explore ways of cutting out the duplication and looking at how we can use, if that's the right word, conservation



authorities to deliver programs locally.

I certainly have found that the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association has done a very good job in terms of some of the land stewardship programs that we've delivered, and I believe the conservation authorities certainly have a role to play in delivering some local programs.

It's a matter of cutting down on the overlap. When the Ministry of Natural Resources comes out and inspects a waterfront lot and the conservation authority comes out and looks at a waterfront lot and the health department comes out and Municipal Affairs and on and on it goes, the people of the province think that we as a government should do something about cutting out that overlap.

I'm committed to working with the other ministries to see what we can do. I work with the conservation authorities, and I commended them for the work they've done in putting forward a paper which outlines some of the things that they think they can do to eliminate duplication. So I will be continuing to work with them.

1710

**Mr North:** They said to us very bluntly, as the association of conservation authorities, that they felt there was over \$100 million in duplication across the board. They also said that they didn't have access to the numbers in the different ministries to be able to substantiate their own number of \$100 million.

Are we, as a ministry, looking at the area that they claim there's duplication between our ministry and the conservation authorities to see if we can either substantiate or rebut the numbers that they're trying to attach to this ministry?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** No, I don't have those numbers. We don't have as much duplication with our ministries. Basically we're talking when farms have streams or rivers, whatever, near them that we come into play, and that doesn't happen, it's not that frequent. It's more frequent with the overlap with other ministries. Ken, did you have a number in mind, or an idea?

**Mr Knox:** No, I don't have a number, but if I might, Minister, the overlap in part that might be being discussed is that we had some joint programs with conservation authorities, with the federal government, the provincial government and the local authorities to do some work in trying to clean up some of the local environmental issues under the SWEEP program, and that program has come to an end.

I'm not sure if those numbers might have been included, but they could have been, and there were substantial dollars that were available there to conservation authorities as well as grants for them to provide to clients within there. But certainly in the local field areas we're working more closely than we have to ensure that we're not duplicating effort. That is, if a farmer has an

erosion problem, the conservation authority or we would go out and talk to the farmer about it, and we would make sure that we're not both arriving there to talk about the issue.

I think as we continue to streamline the operation, the sharing of information that does go on—and it does, because we've had these joint programs, so our staff are very familiar with the resources there and utilize the best resource we can to solve the problem. So if there has been duplication, Minister, I think it's largely been looked after in recent times from the point of view of erosion control and that part. The severance part and so on, I don't have expertise in.

**Mr North:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you. At this time, there's some additional time left if Mr Arnott wants it, and if not, then we'll go to the Liberals.

**Mr Arnott:** I have just one question, Minister. You're going to the conference of federal and provincial agriculture ministers next week, you hope.

**The Chair:** It's not in Vancouver, is it?

**Mr Arnott:** No. What are your key priorities in terms of putting forward issues on behalf of Ontario farmers at that meeting?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I just touched briefly on it earlier. We are looking at ways of delivering some support for the horticultural industry. One of the programs that's been on hold, if you want, for a while is the concept of an enhanced NISA program for edible horticultural producers. I'm hoping that we can get some agreement among the provinces and the federal government on that issue.

We also would like to resolve the whole safety net. There will be major discussions around safety nets, and we are continuing to support the existing safety nets and looking at what we're going to do with tripartite. Now, I've had an urgent plea about tripartite because there are major concerns from the Ontario cattlemen now about potential countervail. They would like to see the program terminated at the end of this year.

It's very unusual to have a commodity group that wants to terminate a program, but they do want it replaced with something, so I'm hoping that we can have some discussions about a potential replacement program that will be green in terms of GATT and hopefully we won't be putting something together very quickly that will not work or is unaffordable. Those are some of the main ones.

Another sort of informal discussion that I hope to have with the federal minister, who has just received enhanced responsibilities for food—before, he was simply in charge of agriculture; his new portfolio parallels my responsibilities much more closely now, so he will also have some responsibility for food administration. It will be an opportunity to discuss some of the

food industry side of things, which, quite frankly, has not happened in other ministers' conferences. It was strictly on the agriculture side.

He also has some responsibilities now for rural issues. I have a keen interest in terms of community and economic development and the revitalization of rural Ontario, and I certainly intend to ask him if he has any ideas or plans in terms of how we're going to do with rural Canada and how the province and the federal government might work together in terms of trying to maintain a reasonable economy in rural parts of this province as well as the country. That's something I look forward to.

**Mrs Fawcett:** The agriculture and rural services division of the ministry includes the land use planning branch. Possibly we went into this before, but I'd just like to get it back on. The Interim Waste Authority has proposed a number of landfill sites on prime agricultural land, and it's really of concern to a lot of people. I know that you have expressed strong statements in the past about the protection of agricultural land, and I'd just like to get your thoughts again on these sites that are really questionable, I guess, from an agricultural standpoint.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** It's rather unfortunate that the criteria for landfill sites do not certainly have the fact that it's agricultural land, but it seems when they go through the criteria that they have when they're looking for sites, inevitably they seem to end up on good agricultural land because they're looking for a clay base.

It's very unfortunate. I don't like to see prime agricultural land used for waste disposal. I guess on the other hand, though, if you put garbage in an unsuitable site, without having some criteria, there's a great potential for the leachate to pollute the watercourses, which could affect all farm land. It's a very distasteful exercise, in my view. Unfortunately, it's happening across the province. Most counties—it seems to me most of them, anyway—are looking for landfill sites. I'm certainly aware of my own two counties—

**Mrs Fawcett:** Mine too.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** —and Northumberland and Wellington. I don't know what's happening in the far east, but—

**Mr Cleary:** Same thing.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** —all counties are looking for landfill sites. It's a very painful exercise. It's very expensive.

**Mrs Fawcett:** And costly, millions.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I often express my concern about what it's costing the province, and in some cases the municipalities and the counties, to find sites that are suitable. It's obviously a much more technical and scientific exercise than it was in the past. It wasn't too many years ago you could drive down side roads, at

least in the part of Hastings where I live, and the dump was sort of at the end of the road. It could be a swamp or it could be whatever was there; that was the dump. We're obviously becoming a little more scientific.

But it is causing grief for me, and I know it's causing some grief in the farm community. Some of the farm organizations, of course, have responded by saying incineration is the answer. At this point in time, we have said as a government that we don't think that's the answer now. It may be in the future.

**Mrs Fawcett:** It's actually been a little stronger. You've said never. I don't know whether we should ever say never.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I have been consistent in my response, that it's not suitable now, and that's as far as I'm going to go. The technology may improve to the point where it is a viable option, and for the sake of farm land, I hope we do get some better technology.

But as I said yesterday, probably the long-term answer is to cut out the waste stream and get back to what it was when I was a kid, where if you had one small pail of garbage for the summer, it was a lot of garbage. Now we seem to create more than that every day in many families across the province because we've become a disposable society.

I think there are some things to be done on both sides of the equation. Hopefully, when we get done we'll be able to protect and save farm land and it won't end up being a landfill site.

1720

**Mrs Fawcett:** When the IWA used its aerial photography and took the photographs in winter, to me, that really drummed up a lot of questions. Would your ministry have any input? Do you talk to the IWA? Can you have much input there as to the suitability of this? Do you really think those photographs were good ones and that the selection process was a good one?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** We've got Neil Smith, whom we dragged out of another meeting to come back to respond to Mr Murdoch. He didn't make it to that question, so we'll let him respond. He's done a lot of work in the land use planning branch.

**Mr Neil Smith:** Our ministry has been involved in the IWA process throughout the beginning. Our role in that is to ensure that agriculture is part of the process and has an appropriate weighting and consideration throughout.

I can't answer the question about the photographs; I don't know.

**Mrs Fawcett:** If somebody could tell me that they were infrared and it didn't matter whether there was snow on the ground and the middle of winter or whatever and that this was good, maybe it would lend a little credibility. But these are the kinds of things that just drive people nuts, when they don't have the technical



knowledge. I don't know: Was there any technical knowledge there?

**Mr Smith:** From my experience, they're using the best information that's available to them. They've redone all the soils maps. They've gone out and interviewed people left, right and centre and they field-checked all the sites. I think they've done a credible job in trying, to the best of their ability, to find the appropriate information.

**Mrs Fawcett:** It's just a shame when it ends up on prime land.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I don't think they used the aerial photographs to pick the sites. Obviously, they have soils maps of the various areas.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Have we updated classifications yet?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** That's an interesting question which I sometimes hear, that decisions on land are being made that used another system or an old system. Neil, that sounds like your area.

**Mr Smith:** Their process is what they call a sieving process. They started off and they looked at the entire greater Toronto area. They put in various criteria that areas would be excluded: obviously, the urban areas, some of the wetlands and environmental areas. From an agricultural point of view, they tried to identify the lands of the best capability for agriculture, and they used the soil maps for that. Once they got through that process, then there were areas which were still open for possible sites. Through the various stages they continued to eliminate sites to the point where now there are four to six sites in each of the three areas. They only upgraded or reviewed the soil maps later on in the process, when the number of sites was a reasonable number.

**Mrs Fawcett:** I guess I wonder, are the soil maps old or are they up to date, that kind of thing? Have they reclassified? Gosh, a lot's been learned about soil testing.

**Mr Smith:** There's no doubt that in some areas of the province the soil maps are in need of revision, and there is a group in the ministry whose responsibility is, over time, to update the maps.

**Mrs Fawcett:** I'll turn it over to my colleague.

**Mr Cleary:** I was pleased to hear about your discussion on the conservation authorities. In my municipal life, I took on the authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture on a few drainage projects and I know there was a lot of duplication and a lot of extra cost. It's good if those two ministries are talking. Maybe they'll solve some of the problems and cost everyone in the province a lot less money.

Anyway, I have a few comments about the environment. It doesn't matter where you go any more, everything gets back to the environment. We hear the message about the need to control our transportation. We

learn about some industries that may be harmful to the air, the water and the land, and certain household products prove damaging. Eating at a fast-food chain has its own share of implication on the environment. And there's no exception when we get to agriculture: environmental issues such as pesticides, commercial fertilizers, manure, soil erosion—I could go on and on.

We talk about the environmental agenda, which encourages every farmer to prepare his own environmental plan. Despite all the interest, there are still some suggestions from the Environment ministry that sometimes even ag and food industry is willing to forfeit agriculture in favour of environmental concerns. Maybe that statement is not quite correct, but I do believe that farmers are good stewards of the land and they're very concerned about the way they deal with environmental concerns.

This government attempted to disguise itself as having an environmental conscience superior to others; however, that's not necessarily proven true. At this time, I might point out the, shall we say, relaxed approach to the long-promised Environmental Bill of Rights. We've even cut back on the land stewardship II program; in fact, counting the \$1.3 million slashed last August, this program has been reduced by \$5.5 million in less than a year. At this time, many farmers are speculating that other programs will be developed and this is sending a clear message that the minister is not willing to support soil conservation, pesticide storage, handling facilities and water control structures.

I would like to know what real and hard commitments the minister will be making to farmers with respect to the environment.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** A couple of things: When the Environmental Bill of Rights was first mentioned, within about two months of taking this position—the former Minister of the Environment, Ruth Grier, was talking about introducing an Environmental Bill of Rights. As I'm sure everyone in the room is aware, farmers became very concerned about what that meant, because they were looking at a bill that she had introduced as a private member's bill in the former government, when she was in opposition. They thought that was the bill and they thought it was going to be imminent. We've taken more time. The Environmental Bill of Rights has just now been brought in. There's been a lot of consultation.

One of the things I did very quickly was to call together a group of farm leaders to work on environmental issues and sit down and listen to what they had to say, what their concerns were, and helped to facilitate access to the Ministry of the Environment, so that I was able to hear what they were willing to do, what their concerns were, and feed them back into the Ministry of the Environment, now of course Environment and Energy.



I have to give some credit here to the farm leaders. They said, "Please don't bring in regulations; we don't like this concept of being dragged into court," and after we'd had a few meetings, they went out on their own through their organizations and came up with the concept of a voluntary environmental farm plan, which is voluntary on their part. They wanted to show that they were good stewards of the environment and do it voluntarily and show that they could polish up their image, if you want. Whether or not they had a problem I suppose is debatable.

**1730**

You're absolutely correct when you say they're good stewards of the land. I think we do need to be a little more concerned when it comes to the water across all of rural Ontario. I'm not pointing any fingers, but we do have to be a little bit more conscious of water, because we don't see that quite as much. So they have responded.

We do have Food Systems 2002, where we work to cut down on the amount of pesticides by 50% by the year 2002. In terms of the land stewardship II program, I would be the first to say that it's probably one of the best programs we've had. Why did we cut it? It was a term program, for one thing; it was not a permanent program. Unfortunately, in our ministry it seems a lot of programs are brought in as four-year, five-year plans, programs, and then they terminate. They're not brought into the base. That program, as I'm sure you know, was going to terminate next year anyway; we were going to lose it in terms of the base funding. It was a very tough decision to make, to cut that as opposed to something else, but it was going to end next year.

My commitment in terms of the environment is to look at a similar kind of program once we can find the money, when it is available. However, what was involved in the land stewardship was a concept that farmers have gotten used to: the no-till concept.

I remember, when I was first minister and we talked about organics and no-till and low tillage and so on, it was sometimes tough to get people to listen and talk about that. But I was at a conference last fall, I guess it was, and there were some 400 or 500 farmers out to listen and talk about low-till and no-till agriculture; very popular. Going around the province now, I see a lot of corn coming up through the stalks, which five years ago you would not have seen in this province. Everything was plowed up in the fall and rooted around and we lost a lot of soil.

So I think the farmers have their own initiative. We need to continue to do our best in terms of assistance, but quite frankly, we don't have the money now to put into programs. But we are doing some things through education extension and supporting some of the conferences I alluded to, which will help. Obviously, if we can find the money in the future, those kinds of pro-

grams—land stewardship II—are good programs, but right now, we had to make some cuts.

**Mr Cleary:** You were talking about no-till. I can recall many years ago, when the Allis-Chalmers company came out with a no-till corn planter; in our part of Ontario it got considerable use. The only disadvantage of it was the spray you had to use. I don't know whether you were better off to no-till and spray or to work the land and get away from a lot of chemicals. I do know those planters came out a long time ago, and they're still around.

I want to talk a little about food safety, and I want to talk about British Columbia, which has recently reacted to an outbreak of hamburger disease, something that happened in the United States earlier this year. As a result, British Columbia restaurants will no longer be able to serve pink meat. I'm just wondering, Minister, do you have any similar intentions?

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I don't have any. I don't think it's my mandate; it would be Health. We've got the inspection branch. People actually eat raw steak. Isn't steak tartare ground-up meat? I tried that once. I'm not here to recommend it to you, but people actually do see that as a delicacy. I don't know whether you would want us outlawing the eating of such things. Anyway, we've got Charles Lalonde with us again.

**Mr Lalonde:** The problem originated in the States in a company called Jack In The Box, which is similar to a McDonald's. The hamburgers being served weren't cooked to a sufficiently high temperature for long enough, so the hamburgers were raw. That's a problem that can occur anywhere in North America in our fast-food outlets.

The majority of the companies in Canada are quite aware of the potential problem of undercooked hamburgers. Health and Welfare Canada has a communication plan that goes out prior to every barbecue season so that individual consumers also are made aware of the potential of not cooking their hamburgers properly. There's quite a bit of awareness in our consumers presently.

Individual companies are reviewing their cooking temperatures, regardless of what provincial legislation or federal legislation is saying, in order to avoid possible liabilities.

I think that as we rely more and more on education, consumers have to learn to refuse consuming product they buy if it's not cooked properly. These sad examples that occurred in the States are just a reminder.

**The Chair:** Or at least be more careful when you say, "Have it your way."

**Mr Lalonde:** Yes.

**The Chair:** One more question, Mr Cleary.

**Mr Cleary:** Just one more?

**The Chair:** Just one more, unless it's a long one. Then you can have two of them. Please proceed.

**Mr Cleary:** I guess food safety is on everyone's mind. I sure learned that when the dairy inspectors were being cut, and I guess also the provincial inspectors in Ontario's small-scale abattoirs and butcher shops. I can see now that changes are happening with the closing of the stockyards here. As I travel around Ontario and talk to some of the farmers who ship their livestock to Toronto, it would seem to me that there are going to be smaller slaughtering houses, or whatever you might call them, popping up in different areas in the province. I just wondered what the minister's intentions would be on that.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Any new abattoirs will be required to be licensed and have an inspected operation. I believe there may be some opportunities in fact, and you're probably right, for some entrepreneurs to look at how they might open up abattoirs, meat processing, on a microscale, which I very much favour, a decentralized industry which hopefully can be competitive and viable.

But we know that in terms of the stockyards, about 70% or 80% of the livestock that was brought to the stockyards was trucked back out to other parts of the province for processing. A lot of it was going out. What will happen to the current processing that's down in that area of Toronto remains to be seen, in terms of what kind of investment. Some of the facilities are fairly old. Whether they will continue to be there or whether they will move outside of the city at this point in time we'll have to wait and see, because they're obviously all in private hands.

**The Chair:** You're beefing up small business, I see.

**Mr Lalonde:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Very good. One more, Mr Cleary, a real quick one. Mr Jordan has a quick one and then we'd like to move to the vote, if we can.

**Mr Cleary:** Kind of to wrap up, I would like to talk about the family farm. As we all know, the whole family works on the family farm. This being said, we continue to see large multinational companies buying into rural Ontario as a result, often dominating the small family operation. I was wondering if the minister would provide assurance that he will do everything he can to keep the family farm alive, but also a clear-cut action plan on how he might do that.

1740

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Do you want a brief answer to that?

**The Chair:** Well, I know it's not in your briefing notes. I think you can do this one off the top of your head.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** It's the brevity part that's the problem with an answer of mine.

**The Chair:** It's your time, Minister.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** I think the family farm is an important component of rural Ontario in terms of the economy. It was on that basis that many of the towns developed in agricultural areas to service agriculture, and it's become a two-way relationship over time.

Most of us have a warm feeling about the family farm. It's a traditional way of agriculture that has developed in this country and in the province. Given its limited sort of size, it probably is not as viable as it was 25 years ago. The people who are now trying to farm 100 acres or 200 acres are not able to return the same income or at the same level as they were 20 or 25 years ago.

Whether or not it's going to be possible, 25 years from now, for a family to live on what it can get from a 200-acre farm is, I would suggest, in some question. We have a Vision 2020 exercise where we're bringing the farm leaders and the food industry people together to talk about the future.

I, for one, obviously want to do everything I can in terms of support of the family farm. That has to be based, in my view, on money from the marketplace, and we have to look at creative ways of getting the consumer dollar back to the farmer.

I can remember the very first press conference I ever did where I said that people are going to have to pay more for food. That didn't go over very big, but I still believe that most people want farmers in this province and country to grow food here rather than import it, and I feel very strongly about that. I think in some cases they're going to have to pay a little bit more, but we've got to get that money back to the farmer somehow, and not lose it in all the chains that the food goes through.

I think we have to look at getting some "value added" dollars back to the farmer. I think we have to help governments have a role to play in assisting farmers individually and collectively in terms of marketing. As to the ones who are not involved in supply management where prices are set to give them a reasonable income, we need to be able to work with them to help them work cooperatively to get the maximum amount they can get out of that consumer dollar.

The consumer dollar at the checkout: I don't have numbers, but I suspect we're probably looking at somewhere in the order of 10% or 15% at best that goes back to the primary producer. It's a very low percentage of the dollars spent on food that actually gets back to the farmer. We need to look at creative ways of doing that if we are going to in fact save the family farm.

I think the other part that's important in this is to get some economic activity out in rural Ontario. I do not think that all businesses and all jobs should be created in Toronto or Hamilton or Windsor. I think we need to look at how we can have some economic activity. Let's face it, 80% of the farmers, either they or their spouses

or partners, have off-farm incomes. It's an appalling statistic but it's there. If they're going to continue farming, someone in the family may need to have an opportunity for a job out near where their farm is, and if there are no jobs available for them, then the farm becomes uneconomical and they're going to get out of farming.

I think there's some combination of factors. To me, it's tied in with the whole concept of rejuvenating rural Ontario and not focusing everything on Oshawa, Toronto or the Golden Horseshoe.

I think governments, provincially and federally, have got to focus a little bit more on what's going on in rural parts of this country so that with that, we will see the family farm continue to be viable at some size. As I said, whether or not it's sustainable at 100 or 200 acres, I don't know, but if we don't do some of those other things, it sure won't be.

**Mr Cleary:** Do I get any more time?

**The Chair:** I gave you a lot more extra time there, Mr Cleary, and I thought you used it rather well. Mr Jordan, briefly?

**Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I have a question to the minister. Relative, Mr Minister, to Bill 162 and the deer farming, how are we getting involved so much from the Ministry of Natural Resources aspect in what a deer farm is and how it should be operated? I'd just like to hear your views on that, relative to farming.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** In terms of Bill 162, we have an LIDA, Livestock Industry Diversification Act, which is ready to go. We have agreement within the cabinet and government that if Bill 162 goes forward, we will introduce this livestock diversification act, which will provide regulations and monitoring of the alternative agriculture, if we want to call it that, in terms of deer farming, ostrich, emu etc, and that will be a companion piece with Bill 162.

I'm sure you've had people talk to you in terms of the game farm issue. There are a couple of groups out there, and I think we've all met with them, and we know that they're concerned about Bill 162. I, too, am concerned, but I have an act which I think will counter-balance Bill 162 and keep that particular aspect of agriculture, ie, game farming, under the jurisdiction of OMAF as opposed to under MNR.

We have agreed and signed an MOU that we'll cooperate. We'll try not to fight with each other, but we will cooperate. But it will continue to be under the jurisdiction of Agriculture.

**The Chair:** There is a little time. I was trying to—

**Mr Jordan:** Move on, were you?

**The Chair:** Yes, but that's fine, Mr Jordan, if you

want to ask a couple of more quick questions.

**Mr Jordan:** Just a short question—I'm sure he has the answer—because I'm getting a number of calls in my constituency office. Two things on the stabilization funding: This thing of sending in my \$150 and endorsing the cheque to be deposited to my account, to me, is just going to defeat the purpose of the bill, because the people who need the money will not be receiving it, and it's just a shuffling of paper in order to be registered.

**Hon Mr Buchanan:** Apparently, somebody's quoting me as having said that would be quite okay. Subsequent to those comments in circulation, we've had discussions with the general farm organizations. What we are probably going to do, if there's some attempt to destroy up front the cashability of the cheque—and I want to be careful of what I say—we will probably be returning the cheque, saying this is not a cheque because it's not something that you can cash. If you sent a cheque in to pay your bill, and you did it in such a way that the person couldn't cash it, then it wouldn't be considered legal tender.

We have discussed that concept with the farm groups, and we're going to come up with a plan that will deal with that issue and won't sort of turn the whole process into a bit of a shell game.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Mr Chair, is it possible to put, just quickly, four questions on the record, not to be answered by the minister now but by the ministry?

**The Chair:** I think we've had a level of cooperation that if you submitted those to the deputy, she'll undertake to have them circulated to the clerk, who will get them to all the members of the committee.

In the interests of time, though, I'd like to thank the committee for its first round of estimates, and I'm prepared to proceed with the vote if that's the committee's pleasure as well.

Shall vote 101 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? It's carried.

Shall vote 102 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 103 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 104 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 105 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food be reported to the House? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

This committee stands adjourned, to reconvene on Tuesday, July 13, at which time we will commence the estimates for the Ministry of Housing.

The committee adjourned at 1750.



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Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Cleary, John C. (Cornwall L) for Mr Mahoney

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L) for Mr Ramsay

Klopp, Paul (Huron ND) for Mr Jamison

Murdoch, Bill (Grey PC) for Mr Carr

North, Peter (Elgin ND) for Mr Wiseman

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Jordan, Leo (Lanark-Renfrew PC)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 13 July 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 13 juillet 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Ministry of Housing

Ministère du Logement



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 13 July 1993

The committee met at 1538 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF HOUSING

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We are here to begin seven and a half hours of estimates for the Ministry of Housing.

We're pleased to welcome the Honourable Evelyn Gigantes, the minister. Minister, you know the process all too well. In the first round, you're provided with up to half an hour for opening comments, which will be followed by the official opposition and the third party, each with half an hour, and up to 30 minutes after that will be for your response or rebuttal, to be handled in any fashion you choose. Please introduce your deputy and proceed.

**Hon Evelyn Gigantes (Minister of Housing):** I think most members of the committee know the deputy minister, Dan Burns, who joined me last year for the first time, I think three weeks after his coming to the Ministry of Housing, for estimates.

We've distributed, with the assistance of the clerk, some background material which members of the committee may find useful as we go through the course of the estimates, and we'll be happy to try to furnish any other materials which committee members will need.

I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to make a few opening statements. I'd like to reinforce that our one overriding goal in the Ministry of Housing is to ensure that Ontarians have access to housing that is affordable and housing that is safe and secure and meets their needs.

The Ontario housing market, like the economy, has been in a slump and it's a mistake to assume that the housing crisis is over. The crisis continues for hundreds of thousands of households. There is still a huge need out there for decent, affordable housing. With so many people out of work, the waiting list for assisted housing continues to grow.

Today, nearly 340,000 households—that's about 25% of the renter population—are spending more than 30% of their household income on rent. That means 340,000 households spending more money than they can afford on shelter, which means they have little to spare for other basic needs, such as food and clothing. So when the Ministry of Housing is setting its priorities, we have to consider these households, the households that are in dire need of more affordable housing.

We always have to keep this reality in mind when we're talking about housing policy. From my point of

view, it really doesn't matter which government has the responsibility for housing policy, the reality of that need out there is a non-partisan fact.

An essential part of our goal to meet Ontario's housing needs is making sure that Ontario's existing affordable housing remains affordable for years to come and that this housing is also preserved for the future through proper maintenance. Those are the fundamental principles behind the rent control legislation, which has been one of the ministry's key priorities and remains so.

The Rent Control Act went into effect just about a year ago, August last year. From the beginning, our goal for rent control was twofold. We wanted to provide real protection for tenants against high rent increases, and we wanted to do this while giving landlords the flexibility they need to maintain their buildings: no more rent increases above the guideline, except in a few very specific circumstances; necessary repairs or higher taxes or utility costs; no more economic eviction; no more of the 20%, 30% or 40% increases that were experienced under the previous legislation; no more rent hikes on the basis of unwanted luxury renovations.

We also implemented a rent registry system that had existed under the previous legislation but not been implemented. That system lists maximum legal rents for all buildings of seven or more units at this point in time. Through this system, rent control has now returned about \$3.6 million in illegal rents to more than 4,000 tenants.

The act is working well from a maintenance point of view as well. By early last month, nearly 1,600 orders freezing rents had been issued for almost 19,000 units. As a result, more than 9,500 tenants have got the repairs they needed.

It's also worth noting that with rent control, we haven't run into the bottlenecks and backlogs that followed the Residential Rent Regulation Act in 1987. Ministry staff were well prepared for the changeover to the new act, which we discussed in some detail in last year's estimates. Working groups developed procedures, forms, systems and staffing plans before August 10, 1992, and operational staff received extensive training throughout the fall.

With the new Rent Control Act, we streamlined the process by combining the functions of the Residential Rental Standards Board and rent review services and removed the need for a separate hearings board. Rent control will cost \$2.7 million less per year than it cost to operate the rent review system previously. So rent control is moving ahead with some very tangible results.

In the area of non-profit housing, we're also moving ahead with our new program, Jobs Ontario Homes. The first 2,200 units of the program were allocated in March. We were slower getting off the mark than we had hoped, but after spending more than a year consulting on the housing framework and putting together the policy document Consultation Counts: Taking Action on a Housing Framework for Ontario, we didn't want to just slap a new program together. We wanted to try and make sure that we were doing it right.

The Jobs Ontario Homes program marks a new direction for Ontario's non-profit housing. It very much reflects what we heard during the ministry's year-long consultation on non-profit housing and it reflects a new way of doing non-profit housing.

We're designing a program that's easier for sponsor groups to understand and apply for. We're also working on other issues such as access, making it easier for people to find non-profit housing and making it easier for them to know how to get in and how long they'll have to wait for a unit. We're putting even more emphasis on how we choose the groups that develop non-profit housing. The community-based groups that develop non-profit housing are in this for the long haul.

We want to make sure that we're there for those groups. We want to give them the support they need, and we want to make sure the people who develop non-profit housing have a sense of the community they're in: real people who are interested in housing and have strong local ties.

These issues aren't new. They've been around since non-profit housing began. But we're taking the time to address the problems, and we're going to end up with a much better program as a result. I think the ministry has learned a lot about non-profit housing in the past six years—I've certainly learned a lot in the last two years—and we want to use those lessons to improve the way we deliver non-profit housing today and in the future.

When the province first started delivering its own unilaterally funded program, Ontario was in the midst of a housing boom. Vacancy rates were at record lows and the need for affordable housing was starkly clear. In an attempt to start meeting the high need that was out there, the previous government began its own non-profit housing program, which had the full support of the party I represent. As a result, between 1988 and 1991 there was a significant leap in the number and scope of non-profit housing, from 3,000 to 4,000 units in the previous years to 30,000 in a single program.

When our government took office, we recognized that after three years of such heightened housing activity, we needed to take a new look at how non-profit housing was working. We recognized that non-profit housing had changed over the years and that we had to change the way we deliver it. We knew it couldn't be business

as usual. For the record, we started a policy review, a program review aimed at improving efficiency and reducing costs and a review of administrative issues such as conflict of interest and other related issues. All this, and I want to stress this point, is set in a framework which aims to strengthen the community involvement and community responsibility for a community-based housing.

The policy review included an extensive public consultation, and Consultation Counts, the policy framework document that resulted from that review, set some important new directions for non-profit housing in this province. It underlines a commitment to the increased autonomy of a non-profit housing sector which has come of age and can manage responsibility within an accountable framework.

Our internal program review, on the other hand, is a careful and ongoing review of all programs of the Ministry of Housing to make sure that we're really getting value for the taxpayers' money. The program review was initiated in September 1991. The ministry review and other fiscal constraint measures will save an estimated \$100 million over the next three years.

We did all this work before the auditor even began looking at the ministry's non-profit housing programs. So although the auditor had some good, constructive criticism for the ministry, which we are following up on, his report held few surprises. We were already aware of and working on many of the issues he raised in last year's report. In fact, we had reached many of the same conclusions in our own reviews of these areas. So there weren't a lot of surprises, but there clearly was a lot of work.

Some people took comfort in the auditor's report because they thought—wrongly—that it justified opposition to non-profit housing.

Again, the thing the auditor's report told us was that we had a lot of work ahead of us if we wanted to make sure that non-profit housing runs as efficiently and effectively as possible, while at the same time providing more scope for non-profits to operate in a context where their autonomy is both recognized and respected.

The public accounts committee is talking about taking a tour of some non-profit housing here in Metro. I'm hopeful it will convince members that the call we've heard from some quarters to put a moratorium on the construction of new non-profit housing is not one that should be heeded.

What would a moratorium achieve? It would mean less affordable housing when demand is increasing. It would mean even less work for the construction industry, which has been hit very hard by the recession. It would mean putting an end to a program that has created nearly 88,000 homes for 250,000 men, women and children.



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Just last month I was at a conference of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association to introduce Dr Michael Stegman, who's an assistant secretary in the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. He's a well-known academic as well as a strong advocate of community-based housing approaches. He wrote in one of his articles:

"The rationale for a community-based approach to national urban policy rests on the fact that local institutions know the community they serve and will therefore more wisely spend the billions of dollars of existing federal resources while making a positive impact on the local quality of life."

At every single opening I've attended for non-profit housing, I've met people who've told me what a difference that housing has made in their lives, and I'm sure the same is true of members of this committee. They tell me of the stability it's given their lives and peace of mind. In many cases, it's opened the road to a whole new life of feeling at home in the community, and the sense of self-worth that inspires contribution to that community.

So I don't question whether the program is meeting its goal of providing decent affordable housing. It is. But I do understand the scrutiny that the program has come under. We spend a lot of money on non-profit housing and that means we have to be very careful with those expenditures.

We're taking the cost of non-profit housing very seriously, and like every other government program, we've had to find ways to make non-profit housing more cost-effective.

Costs are a key issue, so let me take a moment to take a look at what they are. First, the province does not fund the capital cost of non-profit housing from tax dollars. These days all of the capital financing for non-profit housing is provided by private lenders. In the case of the previous government's Homes Now program, 100% of the financing for capital cost came from the Canada pension plan funds. Not now. Now it's competitive mortgage financing.

The ministry provides an operating subsidy to the non-profit housing sponsors to cover the difference between the total operating costs, which includes mortgage payments, and the rents collected from both rent-geared-to-income tenants and those paying market rents.

The ministry doesn't start paying for non-profit housing, meaning we don't start paying subsidies, until the units are occupied. The first-year subsidy costs for newly constructed non-profit housing are about \$10,900 per year. This subsidy is lower for projects which were developed earlier, and it's important to note that, over time, subsidy costs decline. Revenue from rents con-

tinues to increase while mortgage payments remain constant. The subsidy, of course, is lower for projects that were developed earlier because their initial costs were lower and they are further along the continuum of declining subsidies.

Without expenditure reductions, the total cost of non-profit subsidies this year would have increased by \$235 million. That's because an additional 14,500 units approved under the Homes Now program in 1988 and 1989 are now occupied and coming under subsidy. But because of aggressive expenditure reductions the ministry will be saving \$132 million in subsidy costs.

We've also achieved significant operating subsidy savings by establishing a more economical method of capital financing. To take full advantage of declining interest rates, we introduced a centralized mortgage refinancing system more than a year ago.

These initiatives have yielded a savings of about \$40 million in operating subsidy costs this year alone. We've also saved money through the direct purchase of natural gas and lowering energy costs by switching from more costly electric heating to natural gas and by installing a range of energy and water conservation improvements.

Our cost reduction program has focused on tackling the operating costs of non-profit housing. The Ministry of Housing reduced its spending by \$132.8 million this year as part of the government's expenditure control efforts. That's the whole ministry. And the \$22.9 million saved through the non-profit program review is additional to this.

We'll be able to go through the specific figures associated with some of the material I'm mentioning later, and I've provided charts which I hope will be helpful.

We examined all ministry programs, both in terms of their value and their cost. We made a number of decisions to reduce costs: Some programs were ended; others consolidated.

The ministry is also streamlining its own operations. This includes consolidating our rent control and regional field offices, resulting in three fewer regional offices with savings just under \$5 million.

We've also incorporated several cost-saving measures in the program design of Jobs Ontario Homes. These include changes to technical standards for projects. These standards will exceed Ontario Building Code requirements for only a limited number of provincial objectives, such as energy and water efficiency and ease of access for people with disabilities.

For projects coming on stream this year, we're moving towards a clear distinction between the elements that go into the calculation of unit prices, such as land value, resource group fees and construction costs. We may indeed allow additional expenditures for special



features if the land costs are low. The real point is that we want to make certain that land prices are the best we can get.

We've also ensured that consultants' and resource group fees will be based on the services provided rather than on project size or total project cost.

We anticipate that the changes we've introduced will lead to potential savings of approximately 10% in land costs and program-related cost savings of up to 16%, depending on the type of project.

As you can see, we're taking the cost issue very seriously and we've made some real progress on it. We're working very hard to manage the costs of non-profit housing so we can continue to provide decent affordable housing.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, it's a mistake to think that the housing crisis is over. There are thousands of people waiting for affordable housing, even with the higher vacancy rates we've been seeing over the past year or so.

All you have to do is to speak to any local community housing worker and that person will tell you there's a growing need out there for affordable housing. Vacancy rates show only one thing: the number of units sitting empty at any given point. They're not a measure of need. When the recession hit, people started doubling up and grown children, in many cases, decided not to move out of the family home.

One crisis housing liaison worker said recently in the Sudbury Star: "There is still an affordability problem. The apartments now available are not affordable. We're dealing with people who come here from out of town and young people moving out. They're the people who can't afford the going rate."

Another housing worker, this time in Cambridge, echoed the same views. She said in an article in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record: "We don't have anywhere near the housing we should have. The vacancies are in the high-end units which are beyond most people's means, never mind the people I deal with....I have people who aren't eating some days so they can pay their rent."

The vacancies we're seeing in the market today are in more expensive apartments, not in affordable housing. Even if we filled all the vacant units in the private rental market, we still couldn't meet today's need in most places.

For example, in Metro Toronto there was a vacancy rate of 2% in April, which means there were about 4,800 units vacant. But Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority alone had 20,000 households on its waiting list, and that doesn't take into account all the individual waiting lists being kept by non-profits and co-ops.

In the Ottawa census metropolitan area there were about 1,100 vacant units while the Ottawa-Carleton

Regional Housing Authority had almost 5,200 applicants on its waiting list.

How would we address this kind of need if we had a moratorium on building new non-profit housing? The private market hasn't been building affordable rental housing for years in Ontario. The private market is having the same problem in British Columbia, even after it got rid of rent controls. Non-profit housing also addresses special needs that private market housing doesn't meet: housing for people with disabilities or special care needs.

At the ministry we watch vacancy rates very closely, but there will be ups and downs in the market. I'd like you to remember too that it takes at least two years between the okay for a non-profit development and the initial rent-up. Even with the most thorough need and demand studies, it's difficult to predict vacancy rates two years in advance. We need to make the best predictions we can and we need to react as quickly as possible when we see trends developing.

#### 1600

For example, under the first Jobs Ontario Homes proposal call we didn't accept proposals from areas with high vacancy rates, such as Windsor and Kitchener. Now we've classified regions of the province into high-, medium- and low-need areas. Hamilton and Metro Toronto are still high-need areas, while Oshawa, Kitchener and St Catharines, for instance, are medium-need areas. Sponsors also have to prove the level of need and demand for the units that they're proposing.

Having said that, it's important to note that it doesn't make sense to stop building non-profit housing because vacancy rates have risen or may rise. We know there's a need for affordable housing out there and we know it's a need that continues to grow.

Governments are always being criticized for being shortsighted. Our population here in Ontario is one of the fastest growing in Canada and we're doing what a responsible government must do: We're planning for the future. Everyone recognizes the long-term benefits of a private household buying housing. That's what we're doing from a public policy point of view: We're building housing and planning for the long term.

Building non-profit housing right now makes a lot of economic sense. First of all, land prices, construction costs and interest rates are lower than they have been in years and there are thousands of construction workers out of work. This is the best time to build. Between November 1990 and the middle of June 1993, more than 70,000 jobs were created because of non-profit housing. This is assisted housing. It's not government-built housing. Everything is done by the private sector. Private sector architects do the drawings, private sector contractors hire private sector construction workers, plumbers and drafters. Non-profit housing is an opportunity for the private sector, not competition, and when

it's built it's not government-run; it's run by the community-based organizations which have taken on that responsibility.

Shelter allowances, which are being touted by some as the answer to Ontario's housing problems, don't create any of these jobs and they won't meet the need that's out there. I'm surprised that people don't recognize that if shelter allowances were the answer to our housing problems you might think that the housing problems would be over by now. Our \$2.5-billion shelter allowance program is five times bigger than it was just four years ago, and there are still 80,000 households on waiting lists for decent affordable housing. We spend three times as much on shelter allowances through the social assistance system as we do on non-profit housing, and we still haven't met the need that's out there. Shelter allowances and rent subsidies definitely provide short-term answers. They're part of the solution, as non-profit housing is part of the solution, but shelter allowances don't deal with long-term need.

Non-profit housing is a long-term solution. It increases the supply of affordable housing, which means it provides housing that will remain affordable regardless of the ups and downs of the private rental market. With non-profit housing, we end up with a lasting investment for the dollars we spend. With the 1992-93 shelter allowances, here we are, \$2.5 billion later and we don't have one single new unit to show for it. It just doesn't make sense as a long-term response to an ongoing problem.

I talked a little bit about non-profit housing meeting needs that the private sector doesn't meet, and I think our off-reserve aboriginal housing program is a good example of that. Many aboriginal people living off-reserve face serious housing problems and we've targeted 2,000 units under the Jobs Ontario Homes program to begin dealing with some of those problems. The homes will be designed in consultation with, and operated by, the aboriginal community and we hope to see as many aboriginal people as possible working on or trained through the Jobs Ontario Homes program. We're now designing the program and we expect to have some of this housing under way before the winter.

We've also been making some innovative headway in Ontario Housing Corp. With nearly 84,000 units of public housing in its portfolio, OHC is one of the mainstays of Ontario's assisted housing. The Planning Together program in Ontario Housing is a local partnership that brings together the people who live and work in public housing to improve the quality of life in their communities.

Each of Ontario's 56 local housing authorities formed a local planning committee made up of tenants, housing authority staff and board members and community service providers. The committees were asked to look at

key areas including issues such as tenant participation in decision-making, good property management, safety, security and racial issues and to create action plans. All but two of the local planning committees have prepared their action plans, and almost all of the local planning committees are now working on implementing these plans.

Housing intensification and the development of compact urban forms are among other priorities of the Ministry of Housing, particularly from the point of view of conservation of resources and protecting the environment. Bill 90, the legislation we introduced last year, will allow home owners to create one apartment in their house without specific municipal approval.

It's an economic strategy and an affordable housing supply strategy. I'll have more to say about it when the bill comes up for second reading. For today's purposes, I'd just emphasize one aspect: It is a way of increasing our affordable housing supply at little or no cost to the taxpayers of Ontario.

It's also a step that can help encourage home ownership. The income from an apartment may be just the boost many people need to be able to afford the mortgage payments on a home of their own, and everything that helps the home renovation industry will help the economic recovery.

We're working to bring home ownership within the reach of more people. For instance, a number of government land sites are accommodating a significant component of affordable ownership housing. The ministry also provides staff assistance and advice to affordable housing producers who are going through the planning process.

We've been working with the Sewell commission to explore a number of ways in which the housing policy statement could be improved to strengthen the provision of affordable housing. In cooperation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, we've sponsored an advisory committee to develop alternative development standards which will encourage compact, affordable residential developments.

The committee has completed its working sessions and new guidelines for development standards are being drafted. The office of the provincial facilitator has also been a key part of our government's efforts to make home ownership a reality for more people. The office was established in May 1992, and since then Dale Martin's office has been instrumental in initiating a number of administrative and policy reforms that will help streamline and speed up the planning process, and that means reduced home prices.

I'm now going to ask that Dan Burns spend a few moments to give you a bit of an outline of what's happening in the residential private market.

**Mr Daniel Burns:** I will be brief. I just want to



make a few remarks beginning where the minister made off—stopped. I've got my metaphors mixed here.

**Ms Dianne Poole (Eglinton):** What did the minister make off?

**Mr Burns:** The end of her remarks—and talk a little bit about conditions in the ownership market and touch on some of the things we are doing in relation to that. Before I touch on those things, though, it would be worth stopping for a couple of minutes and recalling some of the main contextual elements that lie in the background behind the housing market.

First, demography: We all know that the province of Ontario's population continues to grow. The population of Ontario grew, between 1986-91, by more than 10%, and is expressed as an annual rate of growth of more than 2% a year.

Household formation, continuing a trend we've had for some period of time, grew even faster, by roughly 13% in the 1986-91 period and by over 2.5% a year. Of course, it's household formation that directly connects to the housing market.

We had, in the late 1980s, a tremendous rate of growth in housing supply as well, and tremendously high rates of construction, particularly in the condominium market but also in other parts of the market. With the downturn, we've had a tremendous reduction in levels of construction but not a particular reduction in the level of population growth.

#### 1610

That's led to a situation that's sometimes called, in the vernacular, "the development of a pent-up demand" or, if you look at demographics and compare the long-term numbers to the number of households that are created by a particular population, we have in the province developed just in the last three years a situation where roughly 100,000 households which would have been created by the population growth, looking at long-term trends, have not been housed by increases in the housing supply.

Those are all numbers. They accord with our commonsense knowledge that people have slowed the rate of household formation and in some cases have returned to households from whence they came or formed joint households with other people when a few years ago they might have formed a household on their own.

We have a condition in the demographic backdrop that suggests that in the coming years we will have expressed a strong demand for new housing. If we look at this year's ownership marketplace, though, we don't see a tremendous increase in new-house sales over last year or the kind of expression in the marketplace of that development of households that I touched on before. I think there are a few important reasons for that worth touching on a little bit before I turn to thinking about

the next year or two and preparing for that.

The first is that we have in the population a fair amount of reluctance about making major investments connected to confidence about their own state, place and position in the economy or, secondarily, the situation of people they're connected to: a spouse, a child, a parent. We know from our own look at the marketplace and from talking to those who assess market conditions that this question of income security or job security looms large in the minds of an awful lot of people, particularly those who might otherwise be in the ownership housing market.

Secondarily, there's still in the marketplace a high level of resale housing. Looking again at the longer term, we've got in most markets in Ontario far more houses for sale compared to the annual take-up of that than we have had normally. There is a very good supply of resale houses, and resale house prices have dropped quite a lot in the last three years.

I guess as part of that we still have, at least in the Toronto market, the overhang of the condo boom which hasn't fully cleared. There is still a stock of unsold condominiums, the result of the volume of condominium building that took place in the late 1980s and into the beginning of the 1990s. So in addition to this reluctance to commit in the marketplace, we do have supply conditions in the resale market that are by historic standards generous, a generous supply, and we still have falling prices.

A year ago, most people assessed the situation as also including a reluctance based on a concern people had about whether prices and interest rates have reached their bottom. If we look at what happened over the last 18 months, that was probably a wise concern for people to have. Prices have continued to drop and of course interest rates have dropped quite dramatically, creating on the affordability side the best affordability situation we've had for ownership in a long, long time.

Casting back to the last recession and the market that arose after it, within a year or two of the recovery the demand that was expressed in that marketplace began to outstrip the supply of housing for sale and the capacity of the land development building industries to respond and we had in what was a pretty strong period of growth and inflation generally a tremendous period of price inflation in the housing market.

In this period of preparation for the next market, we think it's important that we address some of the questions of supply and cost in a more effective way perhaps than happened last time. So we've been engaged in a number of activities that are really intended to try and ensure that we have an adequate supply of developable land, both in redevelopment or intensification settings and in greenfield settings where additions to the urban area make sense around the province.



So the first important program we're engaged in is the continuation of one we've been on since 1987, and that's working with municipalities to have effective local housing policies and housing strategies that accept that they are responsible for ensuring that there is an appropriate midterm supply of residential land and that that land supports a diversity of housing form and housing at a diversity of prices.

This is a slow and difficult process, as anyone who's been engaged in dealing with municipalities about plans knows, but we are making progress and have settled, with a lot of municipalities, a reasonable framework, and hope to settle some major ones in the next year.

Secondly, in conjunction with other ministries and with the office of the provincial facilitator, we've tackled a series of issues that present timing and cost impediments to the housing production system. The minister touched on the activities of the provincial facilitator. I would also touch on the attack being made on the backlog at the Ontario Municipal Board, which is partially successful and has more to come and, in addition, on the work of our own housing advocacy and planning branch, which works with both private sector and social housing providers on an individual basis where they've got problems that need disentangling.

The minister touched on Sewell, and I just want to touch briefly on two other things. The province has announced recently new vehicles for investing in infrastructure. That's another important ingredient in ensuring there's an adequate price-competitive supply of residential land.

The final one is—and I see Morley at the back of the room—a project we've been doing with the provincial facilitator and with the Urban Development Institute and the regional planning offices in the GTA to try to get a solid handle on what the accessible supply of residential land is, what is in the approval process and whether we can see systemic problems in the regulatory and approval process that need a concerted effort to overcome. My expectation is that in addition to finding some points of attack we should focus on, we're also going to, in cooperation with the industry and the federal government, be able to finally produce reliable statistics on residential land availability and trends in prices.

So we have a series of activities that are intended to address the midterm supply of land, which we think is a crucial ingredient in responding to the developing pent-up demand on the ownership side. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Donald Abel):** I'd like to thank the minister and the deputy minister for their presentation. We'll begin the rotation with Ms Poole. Ms Poole, you have up to 30 minutes.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you, Mr Chair. The minister opened her comments by saying that the Ministry of Housing has one overriding goal: ensuring that Ontar-

ians have access to housing that is affordable and housing that is safe and secure and meets their needs. I don't think there would be any disagreement in this room about that particular goal. I think it's a very important one.

Later in the same speech, the minister talked about the reality of the need of people for affordable housing being a non-partisan fact, and that also is very true. The concern we have is that we don't agree with the particular direction of the government. All three parties in our Legislature have a very different viewpoint about how to go about providing this safe, affordable housing. The Liberal caucus has always believed that it should be a balance, a balance which involves the private sector and which involves a multitude of programs, which doesn't involve a great deal of provincial funding but does involve direction and does involve cooperation between the Ministry of Housing and the private sector.

One of the concerns I have is that the NDP government appears to remain fixated on addressing all the complicated housing issues that Ontario society faces with two programs: one being rent control, which would limit private sector involvement in the rental housing industry; and the second, non-profit housing, because the NDP appears to want everybody to live under one government-owned roof.

**1620**

Our caucus doesn't believe it's only a two-problem issue. We believe in a multifaceted approach that does provide balance.

I'd like to briefly review some of the successful programs we did have from the past which will illustrate how that balance could be brought to the housing sector.

One of the things we did as a Liberal government was to bring in, and subsequently amend and strengthen, the Rental Housing Protection Act, which was legislation to protect existing rental housing stock from conversion to condominiums. That's actually only one of the many things it did, but certainly one that was much appreciated by many tenants.

We also developed the Land Use Planning for Housing policy statement to guide municipal planning approvals to encourage affordable housing. If I may say, that particular policy statement was very well received by the municipalities; in fact, we had made tremendous inroads in municipalities implementing a number of those policy statements.

Another program was the expansion of the convert-to-rent program to encourage the construction of new rental stock out of existing buildings. Interest-free loans to encourage the construction of private rental stock under the Renterprise program was another initiative, and then there were rent supplement allocations for Renterprise and convert-to-rent projects.

One of the things that I felt was very effective which was initiated by the Liberal government was rehabilitation assistance for both existing low-rise and high-rise rental stock, particularly the low-rise rehabilitation. I think this was extremely important, given the fact that we have an aging housing stock and it is very important to ensure that tenants are not living in hovels and slums.

The Liberal government believed in development of a building industry strategy in conjunction with private sector builders to encourage private construction. Something we have certainly noticed over the past while is that the private sector is not involved in building an Ontario the way we would like it to be. We believe there should be specific strategies to encourage that again.

One of the things we had negotiated with the federal government was ongoing federal-provincial non-profit housing funding. This again is something where the federal government has recently withdrawn from the housing arena. It's made it extremely difficult for provincial governments to cope with this, and the provincial government is now stuck, if I may use that word, with bearing the full cost of housing in many cases, where before it was a shared endeavour. Certainly, I would like to see the federal government encouraged to come back as our partner in that regard.

One of the things the Liberal government did just before the 1990 election—I think it was in 1989—was to update the rent legislation to discourage luxury renovations. This was certainly a problem I found in my own riding in a limited number of buildings, but where it occurred, it was quite devastating for the tenants involved. There was a new set of regulations introduced which I believe went a long way to solving that problem.

Of course the 30,000-unit Homes Now initiative was one of the large initiatives of the Liberal government. It was continued, and is being completed, by the current government.

Madam Minister, I think you made reference on page 6 of your speech to: "In the case of the previous government's Homes Now program, 100% of the financing came from Canada pension plan funds. Not now; it's competitive mortgaging financing, these days." I think what you would find if you looked at it is that the mortgage picture has changed tremendously from the boom years of the late 1980s. What is a very viable option now was not necessarily a viable option then.

One of the other things we did as a Liberal government was to develop loan guarantee programs to help non-profit organizations secure funding. Again, this is something that has been increased and continued by the current government.

We provided new funding for emergency shelters and the establishment of regional access to permanent

housing committees to help deal with homelessness for people who could not access other, traditional programs.

One of the things I felt very strongly about which was initiated by the Liberal government was with relation to Ontario Housing, to ensure that women who were victims of violence were given a high priority on the waiting list and were given very quick access to housing. It's that type of program that I think shows sensitivity to some of the social programs we have today and the need to solve some of those problems.

We supported amendments to bring roomers and boarders under the Landlord and Tenant Act protection.

Something that was supported by all three parties and went through the Legislature very quickly was a bill that would allow tenants to have responsible pet ownership. Obviously, this required a pet that was not making a nuisance of itself and also related to a pet that wasn't providing allergic reaction to the tenants in the building. That was a very major issue. I think you're all familiar with the Fluffy case, where an elderly couple had been evicted from their home because they weren't allowed to keep a pet. That's a very small part, a small program, a small initiative and piece of legislation, but I point it out because it was very important. Apartments are tenants' homes, and they have a right to have a pet in their home as long as it's well behaved.

I can see Hansard is laughing over there, but as a pet owner—I'm also a home owner, but I have a dog, a cat and a hamster. I know how my children would feel if we were ever evicted from our home, because we couldn't have those wonderful pets.

Now on to perhaps what some people would consider more weighty measures. There was a Housing First policy that was introduced which allowed the allocation of surplus lands to provincial housing initiatives. That was a major step forward as well. The Ontario home ownership savings plan helped first-time home owners buy their homes. There were land transfer tax refunds for low-income home buyers. There was an expansion of the Ontario home renewal program with a special added emphasis on helping the physically challenged meet their special housing needs.

There were certainly initiatives to develop new partnerships in housing projects with major partners, such as the city of Ottawa's residential and housing cooperative agreement. I know at that time there was also an agreement with the city of Toronto. There were also many interdenominational agreements with various churches to try to increase the housing supply. It was branching out to various partners.

Our government introduced the Seaton initiative, which unfortunately appears to have stalled, but it was an initiative which encouraged good planning and good housing initiatives. There were innovative housing projects such as Street City that were developed. There



was also new infrastructure planning initiated under the office of the GTA; the greater Toronto area is now a household word, but at that time it was a fairly innovative concept to say: "We can't just look at the problems within the boundaries of Metro. We need a regional approach to this." We looked at the greater Toronto area.

There were substantial increases in welfare shelter allowances.

The list does go on and on, but I think I will end at that particular point in giving a list of previous initiatives to show the balance provided by the Liberal government. I want to talk about where we are today.

The previous government understood that there's a diverse range of housing solutions necessary to meet the needs. But the current government, I submit to you, is insistent on chopping back successful programs like convert-to-rent and low-rise rehabilitation. A bit later I'll give you some statistics on the cutbacks in low-rise rehabilitation so that you can see what I mean by cutbacks.

I believe the NDP promises of new non-profit housing for tomorrow are a sham to escape dealing with the housing problems of today. Quite frankly, if you're not a co-op association, if you're not a union affiliate, then the government's not interested in hearing about your housing problems or, in fact, your housing solutions.

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We haven't seen the evidence that the minister mentions about the NDP taking action to reduce the cost of both non-profit and private housing in the approvals process. The Sewell commission was originally appointed to streamline the approvals process and has just issued a final report that, if adopted, will in our view only serve to lengthen the planning process and increase the costs associated with it.

At first, we were very encouraged, and I know representatives of the building trades were encouraged, by the appointment of the Sewell commission. Now I believe those same representatives of the building industry are concerned that the report is more focused on telling them where they can't build and does very little to address the layer of bureaucracy involved in the planning process.

The NDP has appointed Dale Martin to cut some red tape, but quite frankly the verdict's still out on how effective that's going to be. We've had very little indication as to the success. His jurisdiction appears to be primarily concerned with specific government-related projects that catch the Premier's eye. So private sector housing developments are being put to the back of the line, while the NDP's pet projects get priority.

We will be looking at a number of issues in depth during the seven and a half hours of Housing estimates. One of the main ones, of course, continues to be rent

control. The NDP's rent control legislation has now been in place for just a year, but it will be interesting to see if in fact the rent review backlog has disappeared as promised and whether there's a high degree of satisfaction with the new legislation. The NDP had promised to deliver a full rent control system, but what it came out with was Bill 121, which had the unique qualification of upsetting both landlord and tenant groups.

We will be looking at administration costs and how the new system is working, not only with the startup costs but whether in fact the new system is working effectively. We will also be looking at issues such as maintenance and whether the tracking system they've instituted is working, whether in fact there are fewer maintenance complaints than before and how that whole maintenance issue is being addressed.

One other extremely important issue which we will be focusing on, primarily because the government has given it such focus in its plans, is that of public housing and co-ops. As the minister noted in her remarks, the Liberal caucus did call for a moratorium. I believe her sentence was, "What would a moratorium achieve, after all?" What we're finding in public accounts and in looking at the Ministry of Housing and how it is dealing with public housing in a cost-effective way is that the ministry doesn't have a handle on what has happened in the past, while it's trying to cope with the problems that are currently present and the problems of the future.

There are statistics and information that we, as a public accounts committee, asked of the Ministry of Housing and were told last month that the earliest we could see that information would be November. It became obvious, from the lack of response to a number of our requests, that the ministry still does not have a handle on the cost efficiencies of public housing, not only what it's paying for the dollar but where those cost efficiencies have to occur and whether we in fact are getting value for those dollars.

The auditor has reported his findings, as I think most committee members are aware, with respect to the ministry's non-profit housing program. The minister's comment was that one thing the auditor's report told us was that we had a lot of work ahead of us. That actually wasn't what the written statement said. The written statement by the minister said, "The only thing the auditor's report told us was that we had a lot of work ahead of us." I submit that the auditor's report told the Ministry of Housing a lot more than that.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, I should have indicated at the beginning that my remarks would be as delivered.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, and I think I did mention that you did say this in your written statement, not in what—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes. The written statement was provided for your convenience. It's not what I said.



**The Chair:** You may wish to read that into the record but I think you're partly into that already. But please proceed, Mrs Poole.

**Ms Poole:** Yes. I guess my point, Madam Minister, is although you recognize that the auditor's report told you a lot more things than that one item, the ministry staff who prepared the written remarks might have had a different idea about that. I think the auditor's report provided us with a lot of valuable information about value for money and some of the areas we need to look at if we are to deliver public housing and social housing effectively.

Certainly one of the criticisms of the auditor was that, while in the late 1980s, the Ministry of Housing could be forgiven for acting a certain way to a certain extent because there was a housing boom—the price of land was going off the scale; the need was tremendous; the vacancy rate was basically zero—with the recession, times have changed enormously. Some of the areas of the province had in fact a significant vacancy rate, where in the late 1980s they did not. While I recognize the difficulty of delivering Ministry of Housing programs quickly, because you do need a certain length of time to get that unit built, still the auditor was very clear in the criticism that he didn't believe that the Ministry of Housing had changed with the times.

The NDP continues to advocate its non-profit housing programs as the way to help the economy improve, but I believe that if the NDP government was truly interested in supporting the economy, it could have moved to assist ownership housing with a more immediate impact on construction, instead of choosing to go the route of bureaucratic delays of complex, non-profit housing approval. So when the minister points to the moratorium we asked for as a mechanism which would eliminate construction and eliminate jobs, let me remind her that there is more than one way to create jobs in housing.

Certainly, if you look at what the home ownership aspect has to offer, if you look at what the Ontario Home Builders' Association, the Ontario Real Estate Association, what all these organizations were recommending, then it became very obvious that there were other ways to help provide those jobs. But I think the NDP has done very little to encourage private sector involvement in the housing industry in other years gone by, and no one wants to build those private rental units under the NDP's rent control legislation. The NDP is doing nothing to solve the home ownership problem.

I think, if you look at the recent statistics, they show that housing starts are not only at an all-time low this year, but they are 10,000 less than originally projected. I think our home ownership housing industry is in a crisis situation and I think it's imperative that this be dealt with by the government.

We have other comments that we'll be making on

basement apartments, specifically on home ownership and the Condominium Act. We're aware that this minister doesn't have carriage of that act, but certainly we know that her comments would have been solicited. We want to ask some specific questions about Seaton, about the housing policy priorities, about the Sewel commission, building code amendments, but I will leave my comments at that and reserve for further questions in the next part of the process.

**The Chair:** This presents the committee with an interesting challenge. Did you want to utilize the additional 10 minutes left to you or did Mr Brown wish to use a few moments, or did you want to yield those 10 minutes or use them for questions?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** We'd prefer to use it for questions, Mr Chair.

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**The Chair:** Then you're at liberty to use your remaining 10 minutes any way you so choose.

**Mr Brown:** One minute, Mr Chairman.

**The Chair:** That would leave you with nine minutes.

**Mr Brown:** Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** The Chair recognizes Mr Brown.

**Mr Brown:** As Ms Poole indicated, we are interested in the issues surrounding rent control, and I guess I'll pursue that line for a few moments.

Since Bill 121 came into effect about a year ago, could you give us some indication of the cost of administration, I guess what the costs are, knowing that you're still operating the old system also, if I understand correctly. What are the costs year over year in operating the system?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We can easily provide those figures. It means we're going to have to call forward some people from the ministry.

**The Chair:** It's not a long distance to move.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** What are we going to do then? Is this going to be part of opening statements?

**The Chair:** It's the members' prerogative to use their 30 minutes in any way they choose. Mr Brown has chosen to make some inquiries, and the minister has graciously invited one of her staff members to respond.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** This is Robert Glass, director of rent control.

**The Chair:** Mr Glass, you've been introduced by the minister and you heard the question, so please proceed.

**Mr Robert Glass:** The costs of rent control, the rent regulation program, are \$32.3 million. That includes the rent control program itself, which is the rent control system and the budget of the Rent Review Hearings Board, which is winding down.

**Mr Brown:** And that would compare to what for the year before?

**Mr Glass:** It is about \$1 million less.

**Mr Brown:** What are your projections as we go forward as the rent review act, I guess, is winding down, or do you have those projections?

**Mr Glass:** I have the projections, if I can find them, but we would expect as the act goes forward that the Rent Review Hearings Board would close down in the next fiscal year, somewhere around June 1994. They would spend about \$1.7 million in the next fiscal year. We would expect rent control to gear up as it absorbed a number of the staff in the board to assist in the rent control program, and then we think the overall costs would decrease from the \$32.328 million to about \$31.2 million in subsequent years.

**Mr Brown:** So roughly the same figure.

**Mr Glass:** No, we would expect about \$2.8 million in total savings over that period. Historically, rent review services, the board and the old standards board, peaked at about a \$40-million budget in 1988-89, so we think there are substantial savings in the total rent control system.

**Mr Brown:** Could you tell me how many cases have been appealed since Bill 121 came into effect?

**Mr Glass:** There is no appellant function.

**Mr Brown:** There is no mechanism.

**The Chair:** The answer's zero.

**Mr Glass:** I should qualify that by saying we have a couple of cases, I think two exactly, where the landlord has asked for an appeal to court on a matter of law, but it's virtually zero.

**Mr Brown:** I'm having a little trouble here. I realize there's no appeal mechanism except to the courts.

**Mr Glass:** That's correct.

**Mr Brown:** So the total cost of administering the new rent control, Bill 121, is about \$3 million or \$2.8 million less than the old system, but there are no appeals to be taken into account because there are no appeals in that particular piece of legislation. Is that a fair statement?

**Mr Glass:** That's a fair statement.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If I could just add on that point, the two systems are entirely different systems. In the old legislation the tenant made an application which was dealt with administratively and then could appeal to the board. Under the new legislation the tenant or a landlord has a right to a hearing at the first round, doesn't have to wait to the appeal round to have a hearing.

**Mr Brown:** But then there is no appeal but to the courts.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It is a different process entirely.

**Mr Brown:** Could you give me an indication of how

many review applications have been put before the rent control board since its inception?

**Mr Glass:** I'm glad I'm being well organized here.

**Mr Brown:** I have the same problem.

**Mr Glass:** I trust you mean the rent control branch, as opposed to the board, as the board continues to exist and as it deals with the residual number of applications. We've received 6,687 applications under the Rent Control Act, and that affects about just under 50,000 units.

**Mr Brown:** How would that compare to the previous year under the old act? I guess that wasn't under the old act, that was under—

**Mr Glass:** We have some statistical information on that. Over a period of time the number of applications is actually remarkably stable, given the fact that it's a totally different piece of legislation.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** They're very different types of applications.

**Mr Glass:** If we go back to 1990-91 fiscal year, we received about 7,498 applications; in 1991-92, 8,300; in 1992-93, 9,200 applications.

**Mr Brown:** So it's ever-increasing.

**Mr Glass:** There is a reason why the number of applications increased in 1991-92, 1992-93. You may remember that we went forward with the registry project, and that resulted in a number of applications being initiated under that program. But generally speaking, the number of applications has been between 7,000 and 8,000.

**Mr Brown:** So what kind of a backlog are we looking at in the system now?

**Mr Glass:** I would like to avoid the word "backlog."

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's the B-word.

**Mr Brown:** I wouldn't.

**Mr Glass:** I didn't think you would.

We have 5,147 rent control applications on file outstanding as of the end of May. It's difficult for me to determine how many of those are backlogged for about three reasons.

First, there are a number of applications that we can't deal with under the new legislation until applications have worked their way through the old legislation. In other words—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Until we clear up the mess from your legislation.

**Mr Glass:** Yes, base rents.

**The Chair:** Now, Minister.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Well, that's the truth.

**The Chair:** I thought his opening comments were quite kind to you.

**Mr Brown:** I wasn't editorializing, Mr Chair.



**Mr Glass:** The minister may make those remarks.

**The Chair:** Yes, you've only got 18 more months to do them in, but that's fine. Proceed.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** The Chair is editorializing and trying to be a prognosticator.

**The Chair:** No, the Chair will attempt to be fair.

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**Mr Glass:** The second reason was that we had to gear up for the new program. We had to hire the staff and train them. The third reason is that we're still working through some of the procedures under the new legislation, so there's a bit of a learning curve in there.

The number of applications on file has stabilized in the last month or two, and we would expect it to be on the decrease. I'd like to get the number of applications on file down to about 2,500, but I'd be guessing at this point, because I'm not sure how the system will work, how long it will take to hold hearings, how many delays will be requested by the agents who are operating on behalf of the landlords or tenants, and other procedural delays that might occur.

**Mr Brown:** I'm not sure that you're the person to ask, but I'm interested in the average rate of increase adjusted for inflation over the last five years in our rental housing stock in Ontario.

**Mr Glass:** Of rents?

**Mr Brown:** Yes, on average.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** In the total market.

**Mr Glass:** I think I would have to pull those statistics. They are available. I think they're in CMHC data, if I'm not mistaken.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We have information here. I don't think they're adjusted for inflation.

**The Chair:** Perhaps we can leave that as a challenge for staff to report back to the committee at the earliest opportune moment. Thank you very much, Mr Glass, and thank you, Mr Brown. The Chair recognizes Mrs Marland for her opening comments.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, we could provide some preliminary information.

**The Chair:** No, I think the Chair has indicated that we'd love to receive it in printed form. The Liberals' time has been completed and we're now recognizing Mrs Marland.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, I do intend to provide some answers in oral form too.

**The Chair:** Well, you know you've got 20 minutes, which you're biting into at this very moment, left to you. I would like to recognize Mrs Marland. Please proceed, Mrs Marland.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** On a point of order, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** There are no points of order in this committee.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** But I understood you to say that we could answer in written form; you're not requiring us to do written answers, I hope.

**The Chair:** No.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll give you further clarity as you require it, Madam Minister. Mrs Marland, please proceed.

**Mrs Marland:** We have witnessed a mind-boggling increase in the budget of the Ministry of Housing since the Bob Rae government took office in September 1990. In fiscal 1990-91, the Housing ministry's total budget was \$655 million. This year it was \$1.143 billion. That's an increase of 75% in just three years. By 1995, the ministry's budget will have doubled under the NDP administration.

Remember that since the NDP was elected, we have been in the grips of this country's worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Throughout this period, the inflation rate has been low. At present, the annual inflation rate for Ontario is just 1.6%. In private sector housing, there has been substantial price deflation. Thus, the Housing ministry's spending increase of 75% since 1990 is truly astounding.

As we all know, after the NDP government's irresponsible spending spree, Ontario's deficit threatens to devour the lion's share of the province's revenues—even more than the health care budget. In response, the Bob Rae government is cutting \$2 billion through the expenditure control plan, \$2 billion through tax increases and \$2 billion through payroll cuts. While the principle of restraint is one that my party advocates, we are concerned with the haphazard, Band-Aid approach of the social contract legislation and the damage that a \$2-billion tax grab is inflicting on our fragile economic recovery.

What we really need is structural change: a smaller, more efficient government which administers only the programs that we need and can afford. No ministry, including Housing, can be excluded from this downsizing, restructuring and reviewing of priorities. Like the rest of the public sector, the ministry must reduce its payroll costs by 5% as a result of Bill 48. As well, the expenditure control plan is supposed to cut \$133 million from the Housing budget for 1993-94, a saving of about 10%. But that's not enough—not nearly enough—when the Housing ministry's budget has grown by 75% since the NDP took office.

To achieve greater savings, the Ministry of Housing would have to scale back the non-profit housing programs which have accounted for the ministry's huge budgetary increases. For instance, why didn't the ministry prevent the future expenditure of \$200 million a year by cancelling the 20,000 units of non-profit housing that were promised in the 1992 budget? Those



units, part of the Jobs Ontario program, will start to come on stream this year.

Clearly, non-profit housing must be the focus of our attention when examining this year's estimates for the Ministry of Housing.

The public accounts committee has just spent several months working with the Provincial Auditor and the Ministry of Housing officials, trying to decipher what is happening in the non-profit housing programs. The auditor, you will recall, concluded that there were insufficient controls in place to ensure that non-profit housing projects were built only where needed and at a competitive cost. In particular, he found the following:

(1) Non-profit housing was built in areas where there were high vacancy rates and little demand for market rent units because the need and demand studies were not thorough.

(2) The cost of projects approved in 1990 and 1991 increased despite a significant decline in land prices and construction costs after 1989. Projects approved in 1991, totalling \$1.16 billion, would have cost over \$200 million less if approved costs had dropped in line with market prices.

(3) Projects were made more costly by (a) approving purchases using highest-and-best-use appraisal values; (b) failing to examine recent land transactions before approving land values; and (c) not using competitive procurement practices whenever possible. Another \$64 million could have been saved by consistently using competitive procurement practices.

(4) Operating agreements were not yet in place for completed projects, and 25% of the finished projects that were reviewed lacked approved operating budgets.

(5) It was not clear whether the most needy were being housed in an equitable and efficient manner because of multiple waiting lists and inconsistent placement criteria and referral practices.

Some individual cases of mismanagement and abuse were astounding. For instance, a non-profit group paid \$2.85 million for less than two acres of land, based on both an outside and ministry appraisal, yet the land had been purchased two weeks earlier by a related sponsoring group for \$250,000 per acre. Thus, the sponsoring group made a profit of \$2.3 million. All previous recent sales in the same area were under \$300,000 per acre.

The Ministry of Housing disputes some of the auditor's conclusions, which were based on models rather than actual figures, since the actuals were not available. Yet the ministry is still unable to provide much of the information needed to substantiate its claims. In a letter to the Chair of the public accounts committee, the Deputy Minister of Housing, Dan Burns, said:

"The ministry was asked to provide actual costs for projects developed during 1989, 1990 and 1991. This

information is available in each of our regional offices but the ministry has lacked the ability to consolidate it in the appropriate manner."

The Provincial Auditor, in a letter to Mr Burns, has stressed that while it is important to get accurate figures on past spending:

"I would like the primary focus of your ministry's effort and my office's future audit work to be on having the necessary systems and procedures in place to ensure businesslike management and financial control of units yet to be delivered. In this regard, the steering committee has asked me to write to you to determine whether your information systems have improved sufficiently to be able to provide the requested information for projects approved in 1992 and 1993 to date."

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Mr Burns's response says that the ministry's longer-term plans are to integrate its two major data systems in order to compile and produce project data. By the end of 1993, he anticipates being able to produce reliable and available information on all non-profit housing projects both past and future.

I am pleased that the Housing ministry will soon know not only what we have spent on non-profit housing but also what the tens of thousands of new units are likely to cost. It is mind-boggling to think that the ministry is expanding the non-profit housing program without knowing what the cost will be to Ontario's taxpayers.

On this subject, I have some further questions for the minister and Mr Burns. Why is it that when I requested the cost projections for non-profit housing subsidies two years ago in this same committee, your ministry was able to provide the answer the next day? Secondly, if you don't have the systems in place to estimate costs beyond the current year, how did you derive the current year's estimates? Are these estimates likely to be reliable?

Returning to the estimates, the ministry summary on page 3 shows that the largest spending increase on the operating side is for housing operations, the cost of which will grow by 12% or \$106 million compared to last year. Similarly, on the capital side, the cost of housing operations will rise by 26% or \$23 million.

Looking further at what is behind these increases, we must turn to the expenditure details for the housing field operations branch which administers social housing programs across the province.

Comparing the interim actual figures for 1992-93 to the 1993-94 estimates, operating costs for housing field operations will rise by 19% or \$108 million. This includes an 18% increase in salaries and wages, a 43% increase in transportation and communication and a 19% increase in grants for non-profit housing.

I would think, Madam Minister, that the social

contract partners will be very interested to realize that there's an 18% increase in salaries and wages in your ministry's estimates. When the provincial non-profit housing programs were considered separately from the joint federal-provincial program, the year-over-year increase in grants is an astounding 44%.

In these hard times and in today's environment of low inflation and falling interest rates, how can the government possibly justify these huge expenditure increases?

My party's concerns about the management of the non-profit housing program and the cost of non-profit housing subsidies are well documented. We have asked the minister to cancel the non-profit housing that has been promised and has not yet come on stream. To help people who cannot find affordable and suitable housing, we advocate expanding the eligibility for shelter allowances, which are presently available only to social assistance recipients.

The subsidies for non-profit housing are extremely expensive, because taxpayers are subsidizing not only the rents that people pay, but also land purchases and construction. The PC Party says let's not use our limited revenues to subsidize bricks and mortar. Just subsidize the people and let the private sector look after supplying the housing stock.

Let us look at some examples. The Minister of Housing recently said that the average monthly subsidy for a non-profit unit is \$942. Some of the individual projects I have raised have much higher subsidies; for instance, \$1,924 a month for bachelor apartments on Coxwell Avenue in Toronto. The Provincial Auditor estimated the average subsidy for new non-profit units to be \$1,042 a month.

Now, consider the shelter allowance alternative to non-profit housing. Such a program pays the difference between what a household can afford, no more than 30% of its gross income, and the cost of appropriate accommodation.

Let's go back to those bachelor apartments with the subsidies of over \$1,900 a month. The average rent for a bachelor apartment in Toronto east is \$450. Say that a single person who occupies a bachelor unit earns the minimum wage, about \$12,000 a year for full-time work. With a gross monthly income of \$1,000, that person should spend no more than \$300 a month on housing. Using a simplified model, if that person finds a bachelor apartment that rents for \$450 a month, the rental supplement would be \$150, if it fully bridges the affordability gap. That's a far cry from \$1,900 a month to subsidize a non-profit bachelor apartment.

Moreover, there is no shortage of bachelor apartments. Right now, there is a vacancy rate of 4% for such apartments in the city of Toronto. Indeed, bachelor apartments have both the highest vacancy rate and the

highest turnover rate of any type of rental accommodation. Here is yet another example of the auditor's finding that non-profit housing is being built where there is no need for it.

The minister likes to point out that the province already spends \$2.6 billion a year on shelter allowances for 611,000 households that rely on social assistance. At an average of \$354 a month per household, that's still a lot cheaper than the average non-profit subsidy of \$942 a month.

A new study called *The Cost of a Shelter Allowance Program in Ontario* by the respected housing economists Clayton Research Associates Inc provides current reliable data on the cost of extending the shelter allowance program. Greg Lampert, the Clayton economist who prepared the study for the Fair Rental Policy Organization of Ontario, concludes that to provide a rental supplement to the 279,000 Ontario households which are in core need of housing assistance would cost about \$383 million a year. That works out to just \$114 a month per household. Assuming that 200,000 families chose to take part in the program, a realistic participation rate, the cost would be \$275 million.

Let's look at the cost of subsidizing the non-profit units that haven't been built yet. According to the deputy minister's figures, at the end of fiscal 1992-93 about 86,700 units had been built. By the program's maturity, 133,000 units will have been built. That's another 46,000 units still to come on stream.

As I explained earlier, the Ministry of Housing says it doesn't yet know how much it will cost to subsidize all those units, but let's try to estimate. The auditor said it would cost about \$200 million to subsidize the 20,000 units promised in last year's budget. At the same rate, it would cost \$460 million to subsidize 46,000 units of non-profit housing.

So here is the comparison: house 200,000 households for \$275 million a year with shelter allowances, or house 46,000 households for \$460 million a year in non-profit housing.

That means the government could cancel the 46,000 non-profit units, proceed with the shelter allowance option and help everyone who qualifies for and wishes to take part in the shelter allowance program while still saving \$185 million a year. Yet the Minister of Housing stubbornly ignores this option in her ideological blindness.

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I'd like to look at the arguments the minister uses to support non-profit housing and reject shelter allowances.

First, she says that non-profit housing construction creates jobs. That is true, but options this NDP government won't consider, such as rent decontrol combined with a broader shelter allowance program, would result in the private sector's building rental units and creating



jobs, in addition to reducing the costs of housing subsidies. We must remember that the mortgages to pay for non-profit housing will be a burden to this province and its taxpayers for 35 years. There is a limit to what Ontario's taxpayers can afford.

Second, the minister says that providing shelter allowances is like subsidizing landlords. That is a ridiculous argument. It's like saying that if welfare recipients buy their groceries at Loblaws, the government is subsidizing Loblaws.

Third, she says that without non-profit housing there would be no affordable housing. The Clayton study makes short shrift of that myth, showing how much more affordable shelter allowances are than non-profit housing subsidies. Also, as I just pointed out, if the government would proceed with rent decontrol the private sector would build more rental housing.

The minister will recall that I released the new Clayton study on shelter allowances in the Legislature on June 21, 1993. I'd like to remind her and this committee of some of its conclusions:

(1) A shelter allowance program would allow assistance to be provided to all those in the needy target group who wish to apply. Right now, families can wait years to be placed in assisted housing.

(2) A shelter allowance program would allow tenants to remain in their current housing if they choose, close to their families and friends, child care providers, schools, places of work and other conveniences.

(3) Shelter allowances avoid the problem of low-income ghettos which can occur in social housing projects which do not have a mix of incomes.

Non-profit projects do have a small number of market-rent tenants, but the ratio of subsidized tenants to market-rent tenants has increased to the point where non-profit developments are at risk of the serious social problems which are evident in Ontario Housing projects. With a low demand for the market-rent units, resulting in an 8% vacancy rate for such units, it is becoming harder and harder to maintain an income mix in non-profit housing.

Since the minister has now had some time to consider the Clayton report, I would like to hear her response to it. I know that her ministry also makes use of Clayton's expertise, so I would expect that she will give serious consideration to the Clayton study and the conclusions it draws.

While we're on the subject of shelter allowances, I would also ask the minister to clarify some figures that her deputy minister provided to the public accounts committee in response to questions I raised. Specifically, I asked for a breakdown of how many shelter allowance recipients reside in non-profit housing, how many in public housing and how many in private sector accommodation. I would like to receive figures that

account for all households that receive a shelter allowance through the program operated by the Ministry of Community and Social Services for social assistance recipients.

My question may have been ambiguous since the figures Mr Burns provided add up to 72,000 households, whereas approximately 611,000 households receive a shelter allowance. The Housing estimates aren't much help, of course, since the Ministry of Housing does not administer the shelter allowance program for social assistance recipients.

I am requesting these figures because there is some confusion when we compare shelter allowances administered by one ministry with non-profit housing subsidies and rent supplements administered by another. If, as Mr Burns's letter says, 13,100 households that receive a shelter allowance reside in non-profit housing, then there are at least two housing subsidies for these families: their shelter allowance and the subsidy for the non-profit unit.

Does the shelter allowance program provide a rent subsidy to social assistance recipients who reside in private sector accommodation only, or is the subsidy provided to those who reside in non-profit and public housing as well? Do some social assistance recipients receive both a Comsoc shelter allowance and a housing subsidy through the Ministry of Housing? Are there figures available for the combined housing subsidy costs of the programs administered by these two ministries?

Will I get the answers to those questions I'm raising?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, you will. I'm not sure they'll all be provided verbally this afternoon.

**Mrs Marland:** That's fine, as long as you can tell me when I could expect them.

Moving on to another issue, I would like to ask the minister a few questions about rent control.

Minister, you've heard from landlords that because of Bills 4 and 121 they can no longer afford even the essential repairs and maintenance that their aging housing stock requires, since they cannot recover the cost of major work through rent increases.

This is a very dangerous situation, especially when coupled with a non-profit building boom that taxpayers cannot afford. An editorial in the Oshawa Times predicts that:

"The non-profit buildings will depress market rents to the point where it will make no sense for a private owner to invest in maintaining or improving a building. The only way for a landlord to make money will be to keep costs down by allowing the building to deteriorate. Eventually, the costs will be low enough to justify the low rents and the building will be ugly, dirty and unsafe.

"As the private market deteriorates, there will be even greater demand for newer, cleaner non-profit housing.



"We will be stuck with a syndrome that will eventually drive private operators out of everything but the very highest end of the rental market. We will eventually end up with nothing but luxury condos and public housing. We can't afford the subsidies and we can't afford the damage this will do to our community."

It is no wonder that the editorial board of the *Oshawa Times* is concerned about the impact of non-profit housing on the private sector: Oshawa has an 11% vacancy rate for rental housing, yet non-profit housing is still being built there.

This editorial reminded me of an interview between Bob Rae and Michael Melling, then chair of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations, in the fall of 1989, when Mr Rae was Leader of the Opposition. Mr Rae said that he wanted to encourage a non-profit model of ownership. When Mr Melling asked him how to get the current private rental stock out of the hands of the large owners and into the hands of non-profit organizations and tenants themselves, Mr Rae said:

"You make it less profitable for people to own it. I would bring in a very rigid, tough system of rent review. Simple. Eliminate the exceptions and loopholes. There will be a huge squawk from the speculative community, and you say to them, 'If you're unhappy, we'll buy you out.'"

He also said, "We need a government program of purchase."

This is the course this socialist government has charted, all right: a rent control system that is putting the private sector out of business, combined with a proliferation of government-owned housing. But it has become obvious that Ontario taxpayers simply cannot afford to build and subsidize non-profit housing as an alternative to private sector rental accommodation. The NDP's housing policy is a disaster.

I can't help wondering why this government doesn't look at what another NDP government, that of Premier Roy Romanow in Saskatchewan, has done with respect to rent control. Last October, Saskatchewan's Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 1992 removed the last vestiges of rent regulation in that province. The government recognized that economic conditions were ripe for rent decontrol with a collapsing economy, high vacancy rates and landlords that were competing for tenants. If you talk to landlords in Ontario today, many of them will tell you that's exactly what they are facing.

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There are examples of other jurisdictions which have successfully phased out rent controls; for instance, British Columbia. British Columbia removed rent controls in 1984, after an 18-month transition and after appointing a rental ombudsman to ensure that tenants were fairly treated. Since then, BC's rent increases, without rent controls, have been slightly less than in

Ontario, with rent controls. As well, BC maintains a rental vacancy rate of just over 2%, similar to that in the Toronto census metropolitan area. Thus, BC's current NDP government is backing away from its election promise to reintroduce rent controls.

You'd think, then, that the Ontario government would reconsider its housing policy, yet the Deputy Minister of Housing, Mr Burns, recently stated during the public accounts committee that non-profit is "a government policy to try and create significant vacancy in every rental market. That's what disciplines rents, creates a situation that gives consumers choice in the marketplace." Is an 11% vacancy rate high enough for you, Mr Burns? Will you still believe that you are giving consumers choice when there is very little rental housing to choose from in the private sector? Do you think everyone who can't afford to purchase a home or live in a luxury rental apartment wants to live in a social housing development? Is this your vision of housing for Ontario? This is decidedly not the vision of many traditional supporters of the NDP.

The people who have come to me with concerns about government-owned housing usually live in NDP-held ridings. Many have traditionally voted NDP. However, they don't want more non-profit housing, because their inner city wards already contain a concentration of social housing projects. For instance, I have heard from residents of the South Riverdale, Bloor Junction and Parkdale neighbourhoods of Toronto. Some of the residents' concerns include: the high density of the proposed projects; poor planning, for example, building projects on contaminated land that will require expensive rehabilitation to meet residential soil standards; overcrowding of existing schools and services; ghettoization from concentrating poor people in their neighbourhoods, when many of these neighbourhoods already suffer from a high rate of crime, particularly drug-related crime; and the loss of industrial jobs. For instance, one project being proposed as a high-rise would be located adjacent to a smelter with a smokestack that is shorter than the proposed building. If the smelter is required to install a new smokestack to accommodate the non-profit development, it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. The company will move this smelting operation to the US, taking about 500 good-paying industrial jobs with it.

Some of the non-profit developments already built in these neighbourhoods are examples of the problems the auditor has discovered. For instance, a few people made huge profits by buying properties, then selling them to non-profit housing corporations for ridiculously high land prices. These residents point out that there are moderately priced vacant units in the private housing stock where people could live if they qualified for shelter subsidies.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** Mrs Marland, I

hesitate to interrupt you, but your time has expired.

**Mrs Marland:** Excuse me, I've been talking for 33 minutes; I started, on my watch, at five to, and it's 27 after. I have the times of the other speakers earlier, and the NDP took 40 minutes. I have two minutes left.

**The Vice-Chair:** I'd be delighted to hear the remaining two minutes.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I don't know how the Liberals feel, but I'm quite happy with that.

**Mrs Marland:** Some of the non-profit developments already built in these neighbourhoods are examples of the problems the auditor also discovered. For instance, a few people made huge profits by buying properties, then selling them to non-profit housing corporations for ridiculously high land prices.

These residents point out that there are moderately priced vacant units in the private housing stock where people could live if they qualified for shelter subsidies. As well, they would like to see more opportunities for affordable home ownership in their neighbourhoods, a form of tenure that this government does nothing to assist or promote.

So far, I've discussed three key issues that are of great concern to the Progressive Conservative caucus: (1) unaffordable program expansion, poor management and insufficient cost control in the non-profit housing programs; (2) an expanded shelter allowance program as a more affordable alternative to non-profit housing; and (3) the damage caused by rent control and our wish to phase out rent regulation in Ontario when the economic conditions are appropriate.

My PC colleagues on this committee and I have several other issues and questions to raise with the Minister of Housing and her senior officials. However, we will leave them until we come to the rounds of questions after opening statements.

**The Vice-Chair:** The minister now has 20 minutes to respond.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I was going to point out to the member for Mississauga South that I had made an agreement with the Chair earlier, which I should have explained to the committee, that if we ran over in our opening statement we would cut back in our replies.

Many issues have been raised here by the spokespeople for the opposition parties. I'll try to deal very briefly with some of the ones where matters of information have been requested and also just make a few quick comments about the approach that has been taken by the opposition parties towards our policy outline and the questions that have been raised about spending.

I think, as we go through these, it will be helpful to members of the committee to take a look at a sheet which is headed "Multi-Year Expenditure Reductions," which has included in it a series of columns which can be run through in detail. Particularly, I would call upon

the help of members of the staff of the Ministry of Housing to do that as we go into the estimates further, because it explains how we have addressed questions of cost control in various ways and I think it will be helpful to members of the committee as they look at it later.

I have been, of course, quite aware that there has been opposition in this Legislature, opposition by certainly the leader of the Conservative Party and in a less clear way the leader of the Liberal Party, to the current government program to expand non-profit housing. Now, the source of that opposition, particularly with the Liberals, is one that is quite intriguing.

We were told by the chief Liberal spokesperson earlier that the Liberal Party supports policy for the Ministry of Housing that doesn't involve a great deal of money. She neglects to note, of course, that it was the completion of the Homes Now program by this government that added \$288.5 million to the costs of the operations of the ministry, for which we do not either complain or apologize. We think it's a good investment. It's curious, however, that she did not note that it is a great deal of public money and it was supported by the Liberals.

What has come between then and now, as it were, to change her mind and the minds of Liberal members on this issue is a matter of great mystery to many of us, and it will be a matter of great interest to the public as this issue gets discussed in public over the next few weeks, months and years, because we do intend to continue with the expansion of the non-profit program.

We have not been insistent, as the Liberal critic suggested—or the person, Mrs Poole, sitting in for the Liberal critic—on cutting back good programs at the Ministry of Housing. We have cut back some programs. We have not been insistent on cutting back good programs; we've cut them back because when we compared the value of certain programs with the value of certain other programs in a time of severe fiscal restraint, we've decided that some had to be cut back. We have carefully weighed which programs we cut and thought very deeply and long about their value and how we could provide alternatives where that was available.

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She also said, which is patently untrue, that in terms of housing needs in this province, only co-ops or union affiliates are groups to which this government pays attention. I think that the many municipal non-profit organizations and private non-profit organizations in Ontario would be utterly amazed by that statement, which I intend to acquaint them with. It is patently untrue and unacceptable.

She asked whether there are fewer maintenance—no, in fact it was her colleague; I forget the name of your riding, Mike.



**Mr Wiseman:** Algoma.

**Mr Brown:** No. Algoma-Manitoulin. Careful.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** —whether there are fewer maintenance complaints under the Rent Control Act than there were under the RRRRA. There are more, because there is finally, under the Rent Control Act, a way of dealing with those complaints, and tenants are beginning to become familiar with that and to use that mechanism.

Public accounts: I will ask Dan Burns in sessions to come to comment with more detail about the information exchange which has been requested by the committee and which has been discussed with the Provincial Auditor, and what information can be made available when. We'll be glad to provide a detailed description to committee members on that subject.

The Liberal member, I believe for Eglinton, had mentioned that there had been a drop in residential housing starts in 1993. I would draw to the attention of the committee that in fact the CMHC analysis of housing starts in Ontario indicates that it has been a slowdown in the early part of 1993 production of non-profit housing which has accounted for the drop year over year.

To turn just briefly to the comments that have been made by the member for Mississauga South, I've got a note here that says, "Figures for three-year growth." This was the earlier comment she had made in her presentation in which she cited a growth of 75% in the ministry accounts over a three-year period, which I'm sure we'll want to look at in greater detail. She suggested that the ministry had disputed the auditor's comments. I would not describe what has transpired that way.

There has been a discussion between the ministry and the auditor as it became clearer what the auditor's needs were for his analysis. We have certainly made every effort to make it clear to the auditor what kinds of information are available in the systems at hand, what kinds of information we are changing the systems to produce, and taking his guidance about the important direction of the work, which he suggests should not be mainly historical at this stage but should move on the basis of what both he and the ministry feel need to be in place in terms of information systems in the future work. Again I'll ask Dan Burns later to comment on this, because I'm sure it will come up again.

There has been an indication by Mrs Marland that we'd had nothing but increasing cost in the non-profit program over the last couple of years to three years. I'd just point out to her that in fact we have seen some real signs that there have been decreasing costs. In the completion of the Homes Now allocations, within the same budget that we had set out initially in Homes Now or the Liberals had set out initially, which was revised

when this government came to office and endorsed by this government, we found that when we came to the end of the allocations process, there was still enough money in the program to go ahead with allocations for another 1,881 units. In fact that program produced not 30,000 units, but 31,881, which is an indication that cost-effective measures were being felt within the expansion of that program.

Mrs Marland talked a good deal about the shelter allowance alternative and referred to the Clayton study, which is indeed an interesting study. It is one which I think bears a good deal of care in analysis because the way that Mrs Marland is reading it is that we could solve the problems of all people who have difficulty with the cost of accommodation by simply giving each household \$114 a month.

The fact is that when we have provided shelter allowances for people in need in Ontario, the cost of those currently is around \$340 a month. The rent supplement programs within the Ministry of Housing, about \$80 million worth of them, cost about \$460 a month. These are the kinds of programs that have been proposed as alternatives, and \$114 a month will obviously help a lot of people who are not now being helped, but it would also be an add-on program, and I would like her to suggest where she thinks that the extra money will be coming from.

If we were not building non-profit housing, in a lot of cases we would be providing extra funding for people who are on social assistance so that they could pay their rent and we would be providing that funding through the shelter allowance component of the social assistance system. We know that this year the shelter allowances will cost the government about \$340 per household, and if we were not providing assistance through the Ministry of Housing accounts for rent-geared-to-income assistance, we would be running an extra over \$300 million a year in social assistance costs.

It is indeed a wonderful notion to think that we would extend assistance to people who now do not get assistance in the housing field. But I want to point out to her this is an add-on, and if you add on the cost of assisting all those people at the rate of \$114 a month year after year after year after year and you haven't increased the supply of housing, it's going to be very difficult for the person receiving the \$114 to find a bachelor apartment in York at \$450 a month. There are only so many that rent for \$450 a month in York. It may well be the average rent, but there are not new ones being built at that rent and there aren't that many that are vacant at that price.

This is something I would expect a representative of the Conservative Party to understand. It's the old law of supply and demand, and you can't just simply be increasing the effective demand, which is what you're going to do, if you increase the amount of income



people have to spend on shelter, without increasing the supply and expect that market is going to be able to deliver to the people who have had an increase in their income.

1740

We have to keep increasing the supply, and as it is not happening through private construction—and it's not happening through private construction in British Columbia either—then it is essential and a very important governmental responsibility to make sure that the supply does increase.

We can afford to do that as a government because we can afford to mortgage over a 35-year period and not have to make a profit, and that's essentially what we do. We borrow money and we pay it back, and we assist people in paying their rents. We would have to assist a number of these people in any case, either through social assistance or by assisting them directly with rent-geared-to-income housing.

We do what a private developer can't afford to do, because a private developer has the need to make a profit. We don't build the housing; the non-profit sector does. We provide the financing over 35 years. We don't have to get a payback in five years or 10 years, and that's why it makes good sense for the public to be doing that kind of investment.

Mrs Marland also suggested that in fact we were creating an intolerable situation for existing landlords in the rental market because market units were being created along with rent-geared-to-income units in non-profit housing developments.

There have been vacancies in market units because operating under the constraints of our program, which I believe have been too inflexible in this regard, non-profit organizations have not been allowed to lower rents the way that landlords in the private market have been allowed to do.

They have been required to keep up rents at a level which had been calculated when their developments were rented first, which at that point were market rents and were comparable to units in the private market. In some cases they're no longer comparable, because private market landlords have actually lowered rents in some cases, so there have been some vacancies.

I should also point out to Mrs Marland that if we took all the market units that are created in all the non-profit developments around this province, it would be 2% of the market units in this province. In many cases they are high priced. In many cases they have been vacant, and they are not competition for private landlords. The vacancy rate I think is an indication of that.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, I'm going to continue, because I just have a few more moments. We can come back to that, Mr Chair.

**The Vice-Chair:** The minister has three minutes to conclude her remarks.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I want to provide an immediate answer to one question which has been raised by Mrs Marland. I thought that we had provided her with information in written form on this, but she had asked about the relationship of social assistance and assisted housing.

The figures I have in front of me indicate that 43% of households which are living in public housing—in other words, Ontario Housing Corp housing—are in receipt of social assistance, and 52% of households which are in rent-geared-to-income units of non-profit housing receive social assistance.

She was trying to indicate, I think, by her questioning that in fact there was some kind of double-dipping going on here. Let me just say, Mr Chair, that it's very important that members of this committee understand clearly what's involved. There's no double-dipping. If there is not payment through the rent-geared-to-income component of our housing program, then it gets paid through social assistance. If a person in receipt or household in receipt of social assistance is living in assisted housing, then the rent charged is 25% of income, period.

I think that those are the main items that I can touch on at this point, Mr Chair. I should point out that there is, for Mrs Marland's thoughts on the subject, a real basic difference between the housing market in Saskatchewan and the housing market in either British Columbia or Ontario.

In British Columbia, the rental construction pattern has been very much the same as it has been in Ontario, and the large cities in British Columbia, Vancouver in particular, have the same kinds of features in terms of the rental market as a city like Toronto or Ottawa. The measures that are undertaken in Ontario are, I think, appropriate to Ontario's situation.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister, for that response. We now go into questions of the minister, starting with the Liberal Party, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin. You have 10 minutes, to the Liberal caucus.

**Mr Brown:** I would like to use a question, and I've been told by other ministers of the crown that it is appropriate to ask questions about your own riding. I would like to identify a problem that we have in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, in particular on our first nations.

I have been just recently discussing with the chief of the Wikwemikong unceded first nation one of the biggest problems they have in their lands, and that is a tremendous lack of housing available on reserve. I know there are some jurisdictional problems and I would like the minister to tell me and, through me, Mr Manitowabi and the other chiefs who are representing the first

nations in my constituency, what specific steps the Ministry of Housing is taking to deal with a situation that only could be described as crisis on reserve.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I really don't feel competent to respond in any great detail to that question. I would point out to the member, and I'm sure he already knows, that the federal government does have a responsibility in the area of on-reserve housing, which it has acknowledged even if it hasn't met.

What we have done as a provincial government is to work with the federal government to provide some infrastructure investments that have assisted living conditions on reserve lands in Ontario, but we have not entered into an active program of developing housing on reserve.

Two thirds of people of aboriginal descent in Ontario live off reserve, and many of them also live in housing conditions which are harsh, to put it mildly. It is for that reason that we have reserved 10% of the Jobs Ontario Homes program units, as a minimum, to applications from aboriginal groups living off reserve in providing off-reserve housing.

**Mr Brown:** I appreciate the reply and understand some of the difficulty in the jurisdictions. I would point out that Chief Manitowabi indicated to me that the first nations believe that the very program that you just mentioned is discriminatory against the people who are living on reserve, and that in fact it encourages aboriginal people to live off reserve. There's a real crisis of people wishing to come back to the reserve whom there is not any opportunity to house.

He sees, maybe incorrectly—and I think he and I would both agree that there's a problem off reserve and we're thankful it's being addressed. But if you can understand what I'm trying to say and what he told me, it is that they see that as a program that is encouraging people to leave reserve rather than to come to reserve. I think you could appreciate the distinction that he's making.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I think you could appreciate too that even to say that a minimum of 2,000 units will be developed as aboriginal housing is not going to meet the off-reserve need and that it is certainly not going to provide any kind of stable temptation for people to leave reserve quarters to come looking for that housing.

I think that we could, with ease, devote all 20,000 units to aboriginal housing and still not meet a need which has not effectively been met in Ontario because there have been extra access problems for aboriginal people. To put it in a brutal word, I think there's been a lot of discrimination about access by aboriginal people to assisted housing in this province. One of the responses that we feel is necessary is to assist aboriginal communities living off reserve to develop housing which they control.

1750

**Mr Brown:** I appreciate all that, and I don't think I disagree with any of it, but the problem really is that the growth rate, at least in the first nations I represent, is astounding.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Can I just point out to you that we've watched the federal government withdraw from non-profit housing creation in this province now, and if we are to take on responsibilities which are primarily federal responsibilities on-reserve in this province, I think we would see the federal government happily withdraw. Personally, I wouldn't endorse that approach. I think the federal government has to take a responsibility, and we have indicated in tangible ways and with a lot of money—I can't give you the exact amount, but it is in the millions of dollars—that we're willing to work with the federal government to provide infrastructure improvements that will make community life on reserve more acceptable.

**Mr Brown:** I think I said at the beginning that I understood the jurisdictional problems and I certainly understand about the withdrawal of the federal government, and I'm not very happy with that either and have indicated that, as has my federal colleague, the member who represents us in the federal Parliament. But if you're Chief Manitowabi or any of the other people living on these reserves, the problem exists, and while we quibble about jurisdictional matters, it's getting worse.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm interested that both you and your colleague on the committee are saying you regret the fact that the federal government has withdrawn from the federal-provincial non-profit housing program. Yet on the other hand, when we do a non-profit housing program in this province, you say we should put a moratorium on it. I find great inconsistency there. Is it only good when the federal government does it?

**Mr Brown:** To be fair, Minister, I was speaking specifically about the responsibilities on the reserve, which, as you and I both know, until this date have always been considered to be solely federal.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We have taken on a great deal of responsibility that others might question, in fact, on reserve, which is to invest a lot of money in cooperation with the federal government in infrastructure, which is sorely needed.

**Mr Brown:** So I can take it from that response that the ministry, other than urging the federal government to do more in terms of actual housing, not infrastructure, is taking the view that on reserve, Ontario will take no responsibility.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No. On reserve, we are not going to initiate a housing program when there's a federal responsibility there. You'll find a difference of opinion on this, but in many cases, the people who live on



reserve would agree with that position.

**Mr Brown:** I thank you for your frankness.

**Ms Poole:** First of all, my apologies for my absence while I had to speak in the Legislature but I have asked for a copy of Instant Hansard, so if the minister had any questions or comments, or the member for the third party, for that matter, I'd be happy to address those tomorrow.

In the meantime, I'd like to ask some questions about non-profit housing. First of all, the Conservative caucus has been advocating for some time that we go to—I'm not sure I should say a solely shelter allowance program, but certainly a primarily shelter allowance program. Has the ministry estimated what this would cost?

I had understood that the Conservatives have said that the cost of providing of 279,000 core-need households with shelter assistance would cost only \$383 million a year, which is \$1,368 per household. Do you have any statistics or any estimates on what you believe a shelter allowance program for Ontario would cost?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If you take the number of core-need households, which we do know, which is in the 330,000 range, and take the current cost of a rent supplement program administered by the Ministry of Housing, which is costing about \$460 per household per month, and you multiply, that would be our estimate. The proposal that is contained in the Clayton report would ease the financial situation for hundreds of thousands of households, nobody denies that, but if it is an add-on program, or even if it is not an add-on program—I don't know if it's being proposed as a substitute for the current rent supplement program; a substitute for the shelter allowance program that currently exists. It's not quite clear from the report itself. However, at \$114 per household it doesn't lift those households out of core need. Let me just say that.

**Ms Poole:** One comment that was made to me was that if you have a situation where rent controls are eliminated at the same time as you went to a shelter allowance system, you would actually have an explosion in costs for the Ministry of Housing in what it had to pay out for shelters. I'm just wondering whether you have done any investigation beyond what Clayton Research has provided. Have you done any investigation of the ramifications of going to a shelter allowance system? I understand what you are saying. You are saying we already have Ontario Housing. We have public housing right now where people are in those units, where they will continue to be subsidized. I have not heard that the Conservative Party wishes this to be totally disbanded for the existing shelters. But taking that into account, if you were to go into a shelter allowance program for anybody over and above who is already in existing, for the balance of the 330,000 core-need families, have you done an analysis of what the

impact would be of a shelter allowance program?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It depends on what level you implement the program. The Clayton report is proposing a certain level which, from what we can gather from the report, would be an add-on to the current rent supplement programs and the current shelter allowance program. If we increase the number of households that have \$114 per month more income, and if indeed that money is spent on housing, it will create pressure in the market. It will create upward pressure on rents. That's quite obvious. It's all very well to say that the average rent for bachelor apartments in this municipality or that municipality is at the level of y dollars per month, but if there are more and more people looking for that apartment at y dollars per month, then there will be upward pressure on the price of that apartment.

**Ms Poole:** Perhaps ministry staff could give us an estimate tomorrow. I've been doing some rough calculations based on 330,000 core households at \$460 each, but I'm not confident in my abilities in mathematics; it was never my strong point.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Oh, don't underestimate yourself.

**Ms Poole:** A misplaced zero or two can make a very significant—I've narrowed it down. It's either \$1,000,330,000 or \$133 million, and I don't think that's quite good enough. Give me a calculator every time.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We'd be glad to provide you with some estimates. We have an estimate in the Clayton report. I'm sure their calculations are correct. Dan wants to say something.

**Mr Burns:** I just want to be clear, if we're going to have a couple of calculations done. Obviously, we have looked at Clayton and have some acquaintance with the academic literature on shelter allowances.

**Mrs Marland:** The answers to her questions are in my speech, but she doesn't have a copy of them yet.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No.

**Mr Burns:** If you want an answer to the question, what shelter allowance would fully eliminate core need—I understand your question to be that—looking at the same group of households Mr Clayton looked at, that's one question.

**Ms Poole:** That's correct.

**Mr Burns:** Another question might be, what would the cost be if all households in core need got shelter assistance equivalent to what they would have gotten if they were fully dependent on social assistance? Or some question like that, because some of the people in core need are social assistance recipients now in the private sector in terms of housing. You have to unbundle some of the assumptions.

**Ms Poole:** Right. If you have the 330,000 estimated core-need households and you deduct the social assistance recipients from that, the social assistance recipients



would primarily be receiving a rent-geared-to-income supplement.

**Mrs Marland:** It's only 279,000 core need to start with in the Clayton Research.

**Mr Burns:** He looked at people in core need who were renters. There are others in core need who would be eligible for social assistance, for example. It's just that once you get below the surface of the question, it becomes a bit complicated. It's not, "If you fully funded it, what would it be?" a one-number sort of answer. But I think we could put out a few assumptions and give you some sense of it.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Most households that receive social assistance do not live in assisted housing. There are about 660,000 persons in receipt of social assistance in Ontario. Do I see a negative sign back there? That's right. Roughly 220,000 are in assisted housing, either

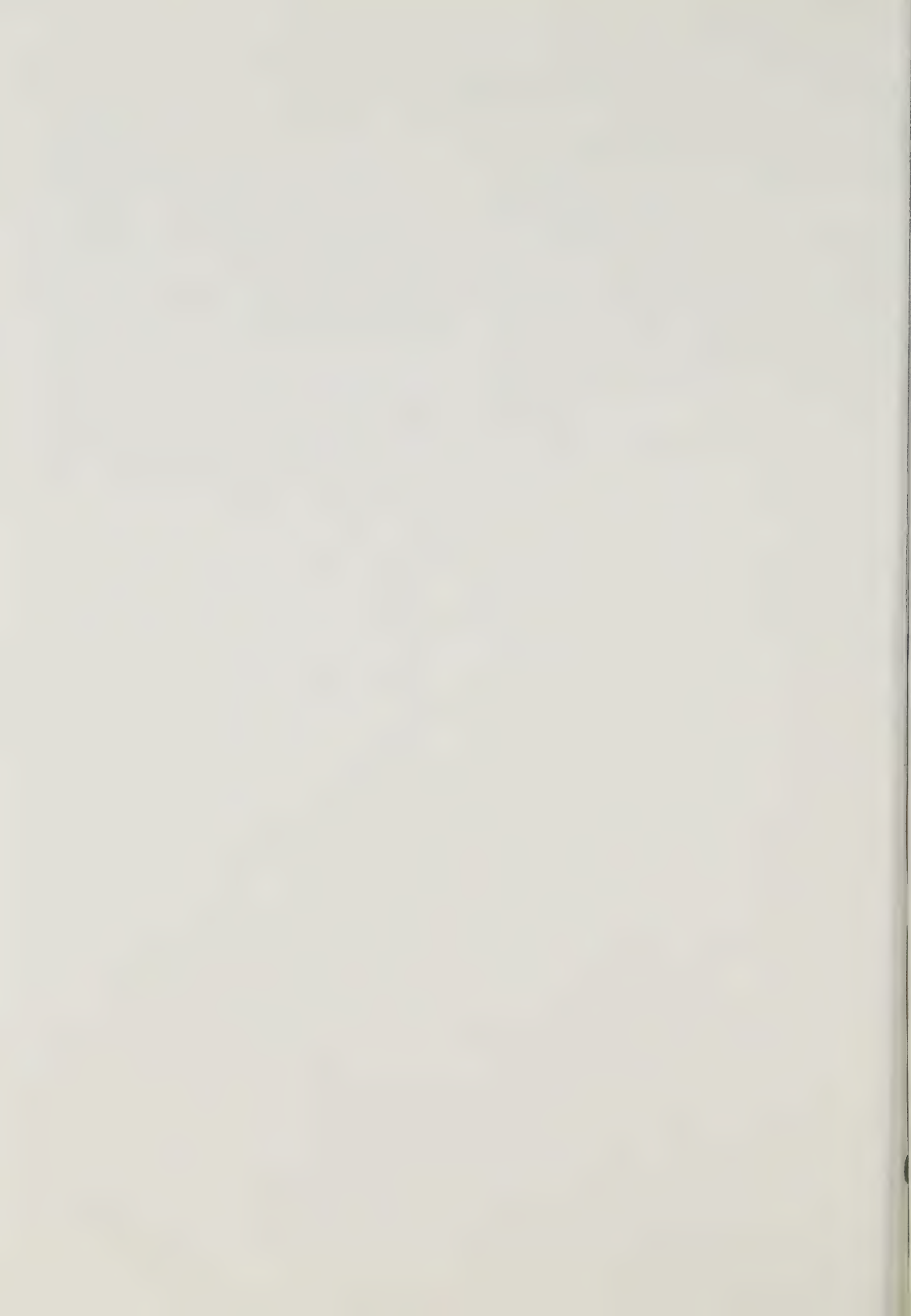
through rent supplement payments or Ontario Housing Corp or non-profit housing.

**Mr Burns:** I'm not sure that's absolutely it, but we'll do our best to give you some building blocks for that calculation you'd like to make.

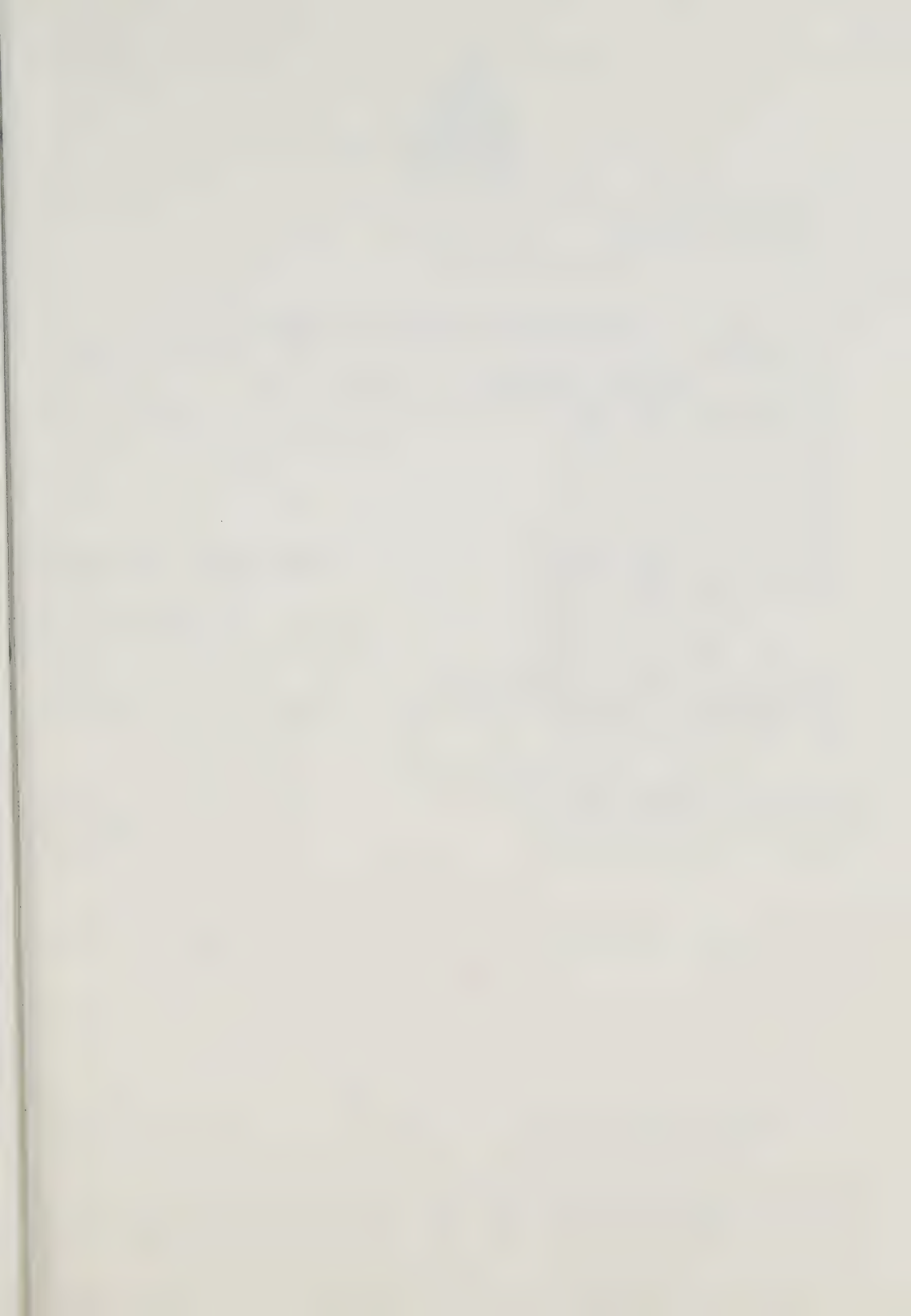
**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Deputy Minister. I'm now being past of the clock, we will adjourn. The Liberal caucus has completed 15 minutes of questions. We will lead off tomorrow with the Conservative caucus. I want to thank the deputy minister and the minister's senior staff for being here to show support for the minister and in assisting in answering questions. This committee stands adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, July 14, immediately following routine proceedings.

The committee adjourned at 1802.









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### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

- \***Chair / Président:** Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South/-Sud PC)
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  - Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)
  - Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)
- \*Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

**Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Harrington, Margaret H. (Niagara Falls ND) for Mr Bisson  
Marland, Margaret (Mississauga South/-Sud PC) for Mr Arnott  
Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L) for Mr Elston

**Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Brown, Michael A. (Algoma-Manitoulin L)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 14 July 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 14 juillet 1993

Standing committee on  
estimates

Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses

Ministry of Housing

Ministère du Logement



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 14 July 1993

The committee met at 1536 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF HOUSING

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We have approximately five hours remaining to complete the estimates of the Ministry of Housing. As I understand, in terms of the rotation, we'll be recognizing the third party. But before that, generally at the commencement of each day's session, if there are any inquiries that the ministry or the minister has responses to, perhaps you could share those with the committee at the beginning to be circulated to assist with any further questions. Are there any items, minister?

**Hon Evelyn Gigantes (Minister of Housing):** Yes. Mr Brown yesterday had asked for information about changes in rent discounted by inflation over the last five years, and we are about to provide to committee members information which may help him, which may be a little bit difficult for members to read. It would be worthwhile perhaps to have Crom Sparling, who's put it together, just explain to members how to read that. This is private market rents. He's all out of breath.

**The Chair:** Mr Sparling, please introduce yourself and your title, and respond.

**Mr Crom Sparling:** Crom Sparling. I'm the director of strategic planning and research in the Ministry of Housing. The chart you have is based on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp private market information.

**Mr Daniel Burns:** The charts are just now being handed out, so people don't have them.

**Mr Sparling:** Everybody have them? There are two pages. We have taken a two-bedroom unit as an average. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp does not provide average rents for an entire CMA; it breaks it out by bedroom count. What you see on the first page, for two-bedroom units, is the average year-over-year rent increase from 1988 through 1992, and what the annual average is over that five-year period is over on your right-hand side. So in Hamilton, for instance, in 1988, the year-over-year rent increases for the average two-bedroom unit were 8.3% and the five-year average, from 1988 through 1992 in Hamilton, for a two-bedroom unit, was 5.7%.

What we've tried to do on the second page, to give a comparison to inflation, is that we've taken the component from the consumer price index that relates to rented accommodation and we have shown both rented accommodation including parking and utilities and straight cash rent only. Perhaps the most appropriate comparison is the first column: rented accommodation.

So you can see here that over the five-year period, this is Ontario, the rent component of CPI has gone up 4.2%.

Comparing back to the previous page, in Hamilton again, the five-year average rent increase was 5.7% and the CPI for all Ontario, for rent increase, was 4.2%.

Now, that rented accommodation for all Ontario is all sizes of rented accommodation as well, from bachelors to four-bedroom units.

**The Chair:** Sorry to interrupt you, but are there any questions going to emanate from this information? If not, we'll just receive it now, at this point. Thank you very much.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Mr Chairman?

**The Chair:** Mrs Marland, I would prefer that you begin your rotation, and if you'd like to look at making suggestions about the meeting time, that we do that a little informally, but that we proceed at this time.

**Mrs Marland:** I just wanted to help the minister and the minister's staff. I was going to make a constructive suggestion.

**The Chair:** I understand the nature of your suggestion: You'd like to finish estimates today. I really am not inviting a great long debate in that area, but if you can assure me that we can deal with it in one or two minutes, then that would be fine. But if not, I'm required by the committee to get on with the business of the day.

**Mrs Marland:** Well, there are five hours left.

**The Chair:** Correct.

**Mrs Marland:** Which is a little more than an hour and a half per caucus. I was wondering, as we have done previously in estimates, about having an agreement whereby, in order not to have all the members of staff who are here from the ministry come to another session, that the time be used by the opposition critics; that we still use the same amount of time that we would have and the government has the option of forgoing its portion of time. Then the meeting would be finished when we had used up our time. In other words, we just go straight through our time rather than rotating.

**The Chair:** Just for clarification, are you suggesting that, to finish today, you and the opposition party divide the balance of today between the two of you and not come back next Tuesday? Is that what you're proposing? I'm looking for guidance here. I'm asking for clarification. Is that what you're suggesting?

**Ms Dianne Poole (Eglinton):** We had a very

preliminary discussion about this, the fact not only of staff time but the difficulties of trying to juggle with very limited resources this month. Last year there were five hours of estimates time on Housing. This year, for some reason, it was substantially more. I guess that's what the House leaders negotiated.

**The Chair:** Mrs Poole, the Liberal Party requested the estimates of Housing, and it requested seven and a half hours. Please get to your point, because I would like to get on with the agenda.

**Ms Poole:** My point is that we concur with Mrs Marland. If we could finish up today, that would be fine. I had suggested that the government might have a few questions. If they wanted to have till 4 and then Mrs Marland and I split the balance of time, that would certainly be fine with me.

**The Chair:** I'd like to hear from the third party—

**Ms Christel Haack (St Catharines-Brock):** That's the government.

**The Chair:** The governing party; sorry.

**Ms Haack:** We're number three in the questioning; that's true.

**The Chair:** For so many years around here you were referred to as the third party. I apologize.

**Ms Haack:** We understand, Cam. It's occasionally possible even for you to misspeak yourself.

I think the consensus on this side is no, we'd like to actually be in a position of asking some questions ourselves. While I know that in the past it has occasionally been the way of doing things, in this case the answer's no.

**The Chair:** All right. Mrs Marland, please proceed.

**Mrs Marland:** That's fine. This way we get more time overall. I was just trying to be helpful.

Okay, first question, Madam Minister: There is extreme confusion in your ministry over not only the cost of social housing subsidies but also the number of units that have been and will be built. I have a set of figures provided by the Deputy Minister of Housing to the standing committee on public accounts in May 1993 which shows the number of non-profit units that had come under subsidy by the end of fiscal 1992-93 to be 86,681. The total at maturity in 1998 is listed as 133,047. It appears that these figures do not include units built prior to 1986, yet the Housing ministry's own community housing user management information system, a social housing inventory, lists 131,681 non-profit units already under management as of June 1993, with another 8,681 still under development.

To add to the confusion, another ministry chart that contains social housing information by region said that the total number of non-profit units was 136,531 in September 1992. That did not include another 84,427 units of Ontario Housing Corp units.

If that's not enough, the Urban Development Institute, doing research through Jobs Ontario Homes, was given yet another set of figures for non-profit housing. Including the last 20,000 units under Jobs Ontario Homes, the total number of units at maturity was said to be 92,600 units, and maturity was 1995 or 1996. These figures from Jobs Ontario Homes included units built between 1979 and 1985.

The auditor had still another set of figures in his report, a total of 81,600 non-profit units under subsidy by 1995.

Talk about confusing.

Can the ministry tell us how many units of non-profit housing there really are in Ontario and how many there will be when all present commitments have been completed? I would like to receive a breakdown that shows the number of units that were built under each non-profit housing program, and during which time period. As well, I would like the breakdown to show the number of units already under management versus the number that are still under development.

Do you want me to give you a few questions, or do you want to answer them one at a time?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We are quite prepared to answer at this stage. I believe, just to begin, that you received a printout dated June 22, 1993, which is the most up-to-date information that the ministry has printed out. Dan was going to make some comments about some of the questions that you've raised under your general questions.

**Mr Burns:** I was only going to remark that the difference in totals usually arises because the question asked is a partial question, that is, how many units there are from a period of time or a particular subset of programs. I think the way you framed the question at the end, which is "I'd like to see the complete universe, program by program," would give you a complete picture. We can do that. The summary sheet that the minister referred to is an attempt to cover all of that. I think it does directly answer the question you just asked. I would just have to check on some of the earliest versions of programs, but I believe this is the universe that you have just asked about.

**Mrs Marland:** So you think this sheet that you handed out yesterday answers that question.

**Mr Burns:** Yes. You see, if you look down the left side, it lists it all by program.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It doesn't tell you, for example, under federal-provincial, when the first noted 31,033 units were being built.

**Mr Burns:** You asked the question of when they arose in time. There's another element to this, that these are all the programs that involve the province of Ontario. That's not the same thing as "How many non-profit housing units are there in Ontario?" because there



are a number of non-profit housing units that are only supported by the federal government.

**Mrs Marland:** Well, of course I know that.

**Mr Burns:** If a question like that is asked—that is, what is the complete number of non-profit units in the province of Ontario?—you get a different number from, what are the number of non-profit and cooperative units supported by the provincial government in the province of Ontario?

1550

**Mrs Marland:** I think my question is very specific, and maybe the best thing to do—although you will have it on Hansard, but you won't get it quickly on Hansard. We didn't get the Hansard yet from yesterday, did we?

**Ms Poole:** Actually, I did have Hansard delivered to me in the House just not too long before I came down today.

**Mrs Marland:** That's why I missed it, I guess, because I was already down here.

Could we agree, Madam Minister, that there will be written answers to the specific questions that I've just placed so that we don't have the ambivalence of, "Perhaps this answers it," and maybe it doesn't answer specifically the question I just placed?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Let me be clear then. I can read Hansard to find out, but perhaps you'd make it clear for me now, are you concerned to have us trace all the federal-only units too, or is your concern the provincial involvement in non-profit?

**Mrs Marland:** I think our total focus is on what comes under your ministry—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Good.

**Mrs Marland:** —and also, as I said, some of the figures are talking about projections, and the projection years even are different. Your projection year here is 1996-97, and I think in one of the letters that we've received it was 1995 or 1996. I'll give you a copy, Mr Burns, of these questions, and I think if I can have assurance that those answers will be provided, that's all I need to know.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's fine. I believe that most of your question in fact is addressed by this page. The one point that is not addressed by this page is an indication of exactly when the federal-provincial programs were initiated, which is noted on this sheet as, "As of March 31, 1993," including 31,033 units. We can give you a breakdown of the date of completion of the federal-provincial program in the years previous to that. Otherwise, you're looking at programs for which the province is responsible and which you can see starting from—

**Mrs Marland:** This doesn't show those under development either. That's what I would like.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It's the difference between units

under subsidy and projections.

**Mrs Marland:** Are they necessarily under development, though?

**Mr Burns:** "Under development" is a term we use for tracking units through the process.

**Mrs Marland:** That's right.

**Mr Burns:** First they start in a program pool, then they get allocation and they get classified as under development. So that's a different number.

**Mrs Marland:** That's a different category.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Do you mean under construction or do you mean in the development process?

**Mrs Marland:** I think we're using your terminology. I think once they're under development they're committed, aren't they?

**Mr Burns:** Yes. That's its meaning: They've got a full commitment from us.

**Mrs Marland:** I think that's why we were asking it the way it is.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Fair enough.

**Mrs Marland:** I'll go to another question. The expenditure control plan lists under its savings for the Ministry of Housing \$70 million from refinancing mortgages for the non-profit housing portfolio. Could the minister provide an itemized breakdown by mortgage of the following since April 1, 1992: the name of the non-profit housing corporation; the amount of the mortgage that was refinanced; the lender, including both past and present lenders if there has been a change; the mortgage term, number of months, for the new or renewed mortgage; the cost of any penalty incurred from renegotiating the mortgage; the old mortgage rate and the new mortgage rate in percentages; the saving that will be achieved from refinancing the mortgage; total savings by fiscal year for 1992-93 and 1993-94?

There's a very specific reason for asking for that information, and obviously it would be information you would want to have anyway. I have been told that the \$70-million saving results from shifting the original \$1.4 billion in Canada pension plan borrowing for Homes Now to private lenders at lower rates. However, because the Ontario government could not simply walk away from its obligations to the CPP, the Ministry of Finance had to pick up this credit line at the old 10.4% interest rate for other borrowing purposes.

If so, there has been no net saving to the provincial government, just a juggling of the books. Is this true? If not, please explain how the savings have been derived and demonstrate that there have been savings, not just a movement of the \$70 million to some other government account.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Dan's going to comment on this one, but I would say, Margaret, that it will be quite easy to provide the information in terms of a group of

portfolios, a group of developments. But if we are to turn to each development, the name of the development and so on, we'll have to go back to original working papers and that will take some time.

**Mrs Marland:** This is only since a year ago, April 1992, but if it takes some time, that's fine, as long as you will assure me that we will have it.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Okay. If you find out the amount of time involved and the amount of work that it will take to go back, you may decide that it's not worth the effort involved and we can give you an estimate on that.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay.

**Mr Burns:** The savings forecast in the refinancing area derive from a number of different refinancing efforts. Some is the renewal of mortgages that are now coming up; I've been doing it in the most competitive way possible. Another is taking mortgages that would otherwise run for another year or two and refinancing them now for an extended period of time to get some advantage of the interest rate break. Third is refinancing some of the long-term debt on the Ontario Housing Corp that's now well above mortgage rates we can get in the market. Only one element of the larger package was the replacement of CPP mortgages with market mortgages.

Now, you're right, the CPP money then flows to the Treasurer. Obviously, then, we have a slower subsidy flow, but we did not get full credit for that in this system, because the Treasurer had to pay to service that debt that he then inherited. What the government did do, though, is forgo the costs associated with borrowing that money in the marketplace, which is a considerable saving to the Treasurer. In addition, at the present time there's a difference between borrowing in the real estate mortgage market and borrowing in the bond market, which made the two kinds of borrowing more attractive when one was in the mortgage market.

We have not, either here or in the Treasurer's accounts, taken, if you want to put it this way, credit where no credit is due. There are some savings to the government in doing this kind of refinancing, not—

**Mrs Marland:** But some of what I said was correct.

**Mr Burns:** Your description of it is quite accurate, but there are savings associated with doing that kind of refinancing.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. And I'll get the other information later?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes. What I'd like to do is get an estimate of what will be involved in breaking out the groups of projects which have been refinanced and isolating each individual development within it, Margaret, and give you that estimate.

**Mrs Marland:** It will all be on computer somewhere, though, won't it?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm not sure it's all on computer, but that's what I will give you.

**Mr Burns:** We can send a preliminary letter that gives you the sense of what the work will be.

**Mrs Marland:** It must all be on computer. You must have the records of what the mortgages are and what they cost. That must be basic information, isn't it?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** These are different programs at different times and in different kinds of categories. Just how easy it will be to draw out specific projects, I can't tell you at this moment, but I'll certainly be glad to find out and report to you.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. Last February, the Ontario Human Rights Commission ruled that landlords violate the Ontario Human Rights Code when they consider a prospective tenant's income when renting a residence. Further, the commission said in a policy statement that it will "seek as a remedy the discontinuance of the application of the 30% rule. The commission does not view credit checks, credit references, rental history or guarantors as appropriate alternatives."

**1600**

The commission decided that the rule of thumb which states that tenants should not devote more than 30% of their income to rent is arbitrary, yet it ruled out virtually all options with its list of other supposedly objectionable criteria. In other words, even though a landlord extends credit to a tenant by giving that tenant the use of a property in return for the promise of a monthly payment, the landlord would not be able to check on the tenant's creditworthiness.

The commission's decision is being appealed. The hearings will begin next February. To see how unworkable this decision is, consider its logical conclusion. This ruling would prevent any company which extends credit from refusing someone just because the customer does not have enough income to pay for the product. It isn't just private sector landlords that will be affected by this ruling; so will public sector landlords.

The provincial government, municipal non-profit housing corporations etc do use income testing to determine whether a prospective tenant requires a rental subsidy and the amount of that subsidy. If the income test were ruled to be discriminatory, the very *raison d'être* of assisted housing would be under attack.

Given the essential role of income testing in social housing programs, does the minister think it is reasonable for any property owner not to be able to use income testing to determine affordability of housing?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm not going to comment on the case, which, as the member points out, is not determined yet. I think, though, that it does raise issues which are of importance, as she points out, in the private market, and also within the housing which we have helped finance and through which we provide rent-



geared-to-income housing.

When she says, however, that it threatens the very *raison d'être* of assisted housing, I would disagree. What it does challenge is the basis on which we determine what a mixed-income development will be and how we determine how that mix of incomes is going to be achieved.

It is a policy goal, and has been for some time in the non-profit field, to have a mix of incomes. As she's well aware, the current mix overall is about 75% rent-geared-to-income and 25% private-market rates within developments. If we're going to maintain that as a goal, then how we determine the income mix becomes a question which this issue affects.

**Mrs Marland:** But how do you determine the income, never mind the income mix? If you can't do a credit check, how do you know what category I would fit into? If I come to you—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It doesn't have to do with your credit rating; it has to do with your income. As you've pointed out, what is in question here is whether a landlord, including a non-profit landlord, in trying to reach the goal of having mixed-income development—which has been set by the Ministry of Housing and approved by many governments—has the right to ask what the income of the household is and to determine eligibility for market units within a development on the basis of the reply.

It poses a conundrum, she's quite right, and we will not have guidance in terms of a decision for a while, as she points out. In the meantime, it leaves the question open, and it is a difficult question. Any advice she has on this would be interesting to hear; I know she won't want to comment on the case itself.

**Mrs Marland:** No, I don't want to comment on the case. That's why my question was very broad when I said, "Do you think it's reasonable for any property owner not to be able to use income testing to determine the affordability of"—I mean, if I come to you for a subsidy, how are you going to know that I'm eligible for a subsidy if you don't ask all the questions to establish my eligibility?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** The difference is this: Nobody has challenged the authority of a non-profit landlord and the social assistance system and our rent-geared-to-income system to determine, under the rules of the assistance program, whether it's rent-geared-to-income or social assistance, whether somebody is eligible for that assistance. Nobody's challenging that in this case.

What is being challenged is, for example, if you come to me and say, "My income is \$1,000 a month but I'm willing to pay \$700 a month for a market rent unit within a social housing development," and I say to you: "No, I'm sorry, you can't enter the market rent unit because your income is too low. You will be paying

70% of your income in that market rent unit." That's the question at issue here.

**Mrs Marland:** If I come to you and say—

**The Chair:** I'm going to have to interrupt; I apologize. This is very interesting, but, Mrs Marland, you've gone over by five minutes, which I'll make up in terms of the time. But I sense—

**Mrs Marland:** Are we doing 20-minute rounds?

**The Chair:** We were doing 15-minute rounds until I lost my courage to interrupt you, but you have now been interrupted. I would like to recognize Mr Wiseman. Please proceed.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** This conversation is going to go in an entirely different direction now. Sorry, Margaret.

In my riding, as you are well aware, I have this place called Seaton. When the land was originally expropriated in 1972 by the government of the day, which was Tory, it did a housing study and a policy study. Out of that came a guideline of the North Pickering project. It was 1975. Half that land was to be designated as agricultural preserve; the other half was to be used for industrial, commercial, residential development.

For a town which started at 250,000—my question is, do I understand correctly that it is now to be 45,000?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I hate to comment on that. Dan?

**Mr Burns:** The government, as you well know, had a series of public discussions about Seaton new town in the fall of 1991 which looked at the question of whether a town site could be established in a relatively small footprint, leaving not just a fair amount of terrain in agricultural use but the valleys in a natural state and principles of that sort.

The smaller town site, developed at densities that were more in keeping with what a small town now looks like in the province of Ontario and less like a series of subdivisions as we knew them in the 1970s or early 1980s, could accommodate as an order of magnitude something between 50,000 and 90,000 people depending on how you went about it and how you staged it.

That process was not intended to produce a population goal for a town site but rather to look at whether you could have a smaller town site developed in a more compact form and maximize the amount of terrain that would be devoted to the other principles that are important in that part of the world.

Following that, we have now begun to organize a bit more detailed look at the natural world out there, at the consequences of choosing more compact urban forms and, out of that, a look at some of the issues involved in timing and economic base. Out of that will come, I think, a more concrete range of possibilities in terms of population.



The number you chose is a possible number—it's at the lower end of the kind of range we've been looking at—but I don't think anyone's far enough advanced looking at this kind of town in this climate to be able to say definitively that it should be a town at all, frankly, or, if it's a town at some point, exactly what its population might be. It's certainly not 150,000 or 250,000 or some of the numbers that have been used historically when thinking about this part of the world.

1610

**Mr Wiseman:** Perhaps you could comment on the ministry's philosophical view of how this development will take place. For example, I remember great fanfare in 1988 when under the Liberal government it was announced that there would be a conglomerate of developers responsible for this. Some of those developers now have gone bankrupt. One's family still is a member of the Liberal Party, was a member in the Legislature.

**The Chair:** Be careful, Mr Wiseman, how you couch that, please—I'm absolutely serious—when you start couching “developers,” “bankruptcy” and “member of the Legislature” in the same sentence. You're allowed your partisanship, but I'd just be very careful of the way that was conveyed. Please and thank you.

**Mr Wiseman:** My question has to do with who the proponent is going to be in terms of how this project will go forward. Would it be the Ontario Land Corp? Would it be the Ministry of Housing? Would the land be sold off? Have you given any thought to the propensity of this project?

**Mr Burns:** There are several stages that a town site needs to go through on its path from agricultural, natural life to urban life, and I think each stage poses different questions about who a proponent might be or how it might be operated. At the moment, the situation is that if the work that's going on now leads to a conclusion that there should be a more active movement towards town development, that would be handled by reviving the North Pickering Development Corp, which still has responsibility for this geography. But there has been no decision made to do that. If you revive the North Pickering corporation, you would then have a board of directors established and some staffing around that.

The first stage of work, if you are actually moving at some pace, is to establish a planning framework for the town site and begin to look at the economic development issues and the physical infrastructure issues. Normally, all over the world, when the public is sponsoring a new town, that phase of work is carried out by the public agency: putting the policy framework in place and establishing the chain of investment. At that point there is a divergence in practice about who would then implement that. Sometimes that's done by a development corporation that's owned in the public sector,

sometimes it's a partnership, and sometimes they've been done by private companies.

What we are doing in east Markham is working with Markham towards a planning and development framework and then looking at how, in an orderly way, we can take the approved parcels within it, service them and sell them to the appropriate builder, whether that's a private builder or a non-profit builder.

It's possible that we may choose to auction large groups of lots or small groups of lots. That's something that has to be carefully examined in the marketplace that you're actually operating in, in order to ensure you get not just a good return but a process that respects your policy goals and delivers you the town plan that people have developed and want to see implemented.

So the question of whether you would have an entirely private consortium develop the town site is one that can be asked and answered at each stage of the process, but at the moment we are considering only the very early stages of this, which is trying to ask and answer questions about a town in that location. That would lead to a decision about whether it's the right time to move to establishing a proper official plan, an infrastructure or framework for the place. Only when you're through those two steps, I think, can you really look at private investment.

I think at the current moment the land development industry is in a state where it is not easy to find financing if you are very early in the development process. The overhang of the real estate bust means that people really only find it easy to finance development if they're pretty close to the marketplace and have the kind of pre-sales and all that kind of stuff that you'd want.

As one other additional thing, I'm not sure whether, even if you wanted to have an entirely private sector consortium take on a major development, at this point it would be a very simple thing to finance.

**Mr Wiseman:** I have more questions, but I will allow my colleagues to ask some.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If I could just comment for a second, when I first came to the Ministry of Housing somebody said to me, “You may be the minister who will oversee the development of Ataratiri and Seaton.” I didn't think so then and I don't think so now.

**Mr Wiseman:** But the disposition of the land will always be of concern, given that it's been there and it's been bandied around and the people who have lived on it—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I remember every instance of change in that land holding over the last many years.

**Mr Wiseman:** Many of those people have lived with 20 years of uncertainty which they would really like to have settled.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's right.

**Ms Margaret H. Harrington (Niagara Falls):** We've got lots of questions here.

In the introductory remarks that you read yesterday, on page 4 you made a very good comment: that Consultation Counts, the document we put forward, sets out important new directions for non-profit housing in Ontario. I would like you, if you could, as clearly and succinctly as possible, to enunciate some of these new directions so that we would all know, and hopefully all of Ontario would know, what these new directions are.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I wish all of Ontario could know; I think that would be very helpful. I think there are two main goals. One is to streamline and make more accountable the process of non-profit development. We are engaged in the only major non-profit development going on in Canada right now. The initiation under the previous government was one in which the ministry learned a lot, but I think there are a number of changes that reasonably should be put in place. Certainly, the consultation we had with interested members of the public, with the building industry, with the providers in non-profit housing co-ops and other non-profits was very helpful to us in terms of figuring out the ways to make sure we were bringing accountability to all elements of the system. That is something we're working on in the design for the Jobs Ontario Homes program. We hope to be able to report the progress on elements of those changes over the next while.

The other important direction was to give better acknowledgement and better recognition within the program to the maturity of the non-profit housing sector, which is often called the third sector in housing. Essentially, that means that having developed and provided housing for thousands of people in this province, either in the co-op form or in the non-profit form, often through municipal non-profits, the sectors are now capable of helping build guidelines for the administration and operation in an accountability framework that can mean we are not looking at every line of every budget they're operating, that we can discuss with them ways of building in incentives to the way we provide financing for operations, for example, and for their methods of providing ongoing maintenance and renovation, so that each non-profit corporation or co-op has more control over its own spending within a system which provides incentives for cost-effectiveness.

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The sector has been very anxious to participate in this kind of discussion. It makes sense to them that we would be moving to a system in which they are treated like mature organizations and respected for the kind of work they do within their own sector to improve the cost-effectiveness of operations and to improve the very programs that are operated within non-profit and co-op organizations.

That's a slow process, because it means that while we

want to be able to report in a sharper, clearer fashion on what it is we're providing financing for and how those moneys are directed within the third sector and to be able to account to this Legislature, to be able to account to the Provincial Auditor, to be able to account to the public about how the non-profit system works, we also want to be able to loosen the controls that are minute-by-minute, day-by-day, line-by-line kinds of controls under which the sector has operated up to now. I think we're making some progress there. Those will be developing kinds of changes.

You're aware that, for example, over the last couple of years we put a moratorium on replacement reserves. As that moratorium gets lifted at the beginning of the next fiscal year, we'd like to develop a new system of dealing with replacement reserves which provides more flexibility for the sectors and better opportunity for the sectors themselves—either the co-op sector or the non-profit sector—to participate in the administration of priority projects, designing the system that's going to provide good maintenance in non-profit and co-op housing over the years to come and to make more effective use of the moneys that get devoted to that in the sense that they've been very constrained about how they could hold those moneys, what level of income they could generate on those moneys in terms of investments.

We'd like to loosen that system up to provide that they can make better use of the moneys and we'd also like to provide them with much more control over the system of replacement reserves as a whole. That's in a context in which we will continue to have public accountability and accountability legislatively and accountability to the auditor about how that reserve system works and what it gets used for.

**Ms Harrington:** One brief supplementary: I think it's very important what you've said, that we get the message out there that we're streamlining the cost and the times involved in development, and also the recognition of the sector. Would that entail licensing of some sort to the sector?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Licensing?

**Ms Harrington:** Accreditation of development consultants?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, we haven't thought of setting up a system of accreditation, but the development consultants in Ontario have started their own association and I expect they'll be setting up their own kinds of standards for professional operations within that.

We have not given serious consideration to setting up an accreditation program at this stage. I don't know that in terms of what would be involved it would be worthwhile. Dan might want to speak to this subject. It's not something we have given serious consideration to.



**Ms Harrington:** Maybe we can get back to it later.

The other point I just wanted to draw one step forward from this is that the whole system of ongoing management of the units will be the focus in the future, I would think. So that's part of your new direction as well? You didn't mention that, but maybe we'll have a chance later on to talk more about that.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I very much hope that after Jobs Ontario Homes there will be another development program, because I see a continuing need for a continuing flow of new units, but the ongoing maintenance and management of the existing units is now a very major task and it's one certainly that the new program design is intended to address.

**The Chair:** I think we've pretty well come to that round. I will pick up Mr Lessard in the next round. Ms Poole.

**Ms Poole:** Just before I go on to the line of questioning for this particular section, I would like to ask the ministry if they have information that was requested by the member for Algoma-Manitoulin yesterday. I think that Mike Brown asked if you could provide the average rate of rent increase, adjusted for inflation, over the last five years.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We did in fact. I think you were chatting with Margaret when we were discussing that. Crom described to us what was contained in the two sheets that were circulated. Do you have a copy of that?

**Ms Poole:** Probably.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Rather than going through it all over again, if you had questions you wanted to ask about it, Crom Sparling, who is the director of strategic planning for the ministry, I'm sure would be glad to chat with you about it.

**Ms Poole:** Okay, after I've had an opportunity to take a look at that, I may have more questions. I'd like to go back to the subject that we were conversing about when we ended yesterday, and that is the shelter allowances versus the non-profit program. At that time I didn't have a copy of the Clayton Research study, but I have since obtained a copy. I'm trying to rationalize the figures that are used in the Clayton Research study as opposed to what I see in the estimates book.

I'm looking on page 92, vote 1702, under the Ontario Housing Corp, "Operating." I'm looking at the upper right-hand side, where it talks about the various rent supplement programs. We've estimated that, for instance, for commercial, and my understanding is that that would be agreements with private landlords in existing buildings, that's a 50-50 funding split between the provincial and federal government.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, we have some provincial-only commercial agreements.

**Ms Poole:** Are the bulk of them federal-provincial split?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, they would be.

**Ms Poole:** We calculated, using the figures given in the estimates book, that would be the cost of \$2,456 as an annual per household subsidy. That's an average. Then we went down the list: community sponsored, we calculated \$2,572; the cooperative tenure support, \$2,652; the federal-provincial, \$2,426. Then we go to the provincial, which is 100% provincial funding, and that's \$6,778.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Ms Poole:** Now, if you take those particular figures and then you compare them with what they're suggesting in the Clayton study, which is \$114 per month, which I think comes out to \$1,368 per household per year, I'm getting a sense of cognitive dissonance, where the puzzle isn't matching.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's right.

**Ms Poole:** I'm having two different sets of figures, and I'm wondering where the difference is coming in. I wonder if you could give us some background on this.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** You're quite right. We did discuss these figures yesterday. You may have been in the House speaking at the time when we did. What I pointed out yesterday was that in fact if you take the Clayton figures, what we're talking about is providing assistance to households which are not currently assisted. They have taken a given amount of money and distributed it over the number of households in core need not currently in receipt of housing assistance, either through RGI or through social assistance. When it gets divided up, it comes to \$114 a month. That does not purport, and nowhere in the Clayton report does it suggest that's going to lift households out of core need, which is what our programs do.

In fact, the programs that you see, supported either through social assistance or through these rent supplement programs or through the rent-geared-to-income program, are programs which are designed to take people out of core need in the housing market. The Clayton report doesn't have that as a goal, doesn't purport to have that as a goal. It's simply a way of providing an alternative to the extension of non-profit housing and a redistribution of that money.

**Ms Poole:** Just for a moment, if you look at the different figures that are being used, I think the Clayton report uses 279,000 households in core need, and I believe yesterday the figure the ministry was using was 330,000.

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**Hon Ms Gigantes:** They used 270,000 and our current estimate I don't have right at hand. Can somebody help us with that? Yesterday I talked about 330,000 and I believe somebody corrected me yesterday evening. Shirley, did you correct me yesterday evening?

*Interjection.*



**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Can't hear you.

**Ms Poole:** That was the number the deputy mentioned yesterday, apparently.

**Mr Burns:** While the staff search for the breakdown, the federal core need methodology reaches households that are owners as well as renters. It also reaches households whose fundamental problem is not affordability but physical adequacy. So the federal number is one large number and within it there is a number of renter households whose fundamental problem is affordability. That subgroup is the group that Clayton was looking at in particular.

**Mrs Marland:** Could you explain "physical adequacy" in your answer?

**Mr Burns:** That's a federal assessment of people, for example, without indoor plumbing. There are still a few households in Ontario which dwell in places without indoor plumbing.

**Mrs Marland:** It's physical adequacy of the building that you're talking about.

**Mr Burns:** Yes, that's right. It's not a characteristic of the people.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It would also include the adequacy given the household, compared to the household. If you—

**Mr Burns:** Another piece is overcrowding. That's right. So there are different components to it, but Clayton was examining the subgroup who are renters with an affordability problem. So you have to unpack the federal number to its components. It's somewhere over there, because I've read it. We have it.

**Ms Poole:** Here it comes.

**Mr Burns:** I can't find it in my own stuff. That's as in 1991.

**Ms Poole:** I think Clayton Research used 1991 figures, so that would be comparable.

**Mr Burns:** Core need problems: affordability 237,000; adequacy 18,000; suitability, which is overcrowding, 23,000; and then a number of people who have combined problems. That gives you something over 300,000 as the universe. But he was looking at the affordability part of it.

**Ms Poole:** Now, the 279,000 that Clayton Research Associates took a look at, were they including people who were already on social assistance?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Some of them would be, because there are people on social assistance who are paying over 30% of their income, in the private sector, for rent.

**Ms Poole:** I understand the idea that you're working with two different types of households, you're working with different material, but there's still an enormous difference—for instance, even within the ministry figures, I find it quite an astonishing difference between provincial rent supplement where it's 100% provincially

funded, which is \$6,778, compared to where there's a federal-provincial split, which is \$2,428. That's \$4,000 more per household per year. That's quite an astonishing difference.

**Mr Burns:** The federal-provincial program goes back a fair amount of time. The provincial program was introduced in the market conditions of three or four years ago at any scale and focused on those markets where the vacancy rate and affordability were the worst problem—in other words, the highest-cost markets. Within that, they had a subgroup of quite expensive individual pieces.

So the result of all those characteristics produces a provincial program whose costs are significantly different than the federal-provincial one, which is spread all over the province, not concentrated and which started its rent arrangements in a whole series of different marketplaces, not just the ones of two, three and four years ago.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** The contracts can be for extended years, two-, three-, five-year contracts with a private landlord. So some of them will be set at a time when rents are high, as Dan points out, and some will be set at a time when rents are relatively low.

As far as I understand it, the account that you would see here is only the provincial side of the federal-provincial program. Am I correct in reading the estimate that way? For example, in the column in the right-hand side, upper corner, where you're looking at federal-provincial and it gives you \$5.103 million, that I think is just the provincial line. So you double that for the total cost, which brings it very much in line with what you're talking about under the provincial program. Some of the other programs are different arrangements altogether.

**Mr Burns:** Right. The federal-provincial program is still less expensive when you account for the federal dollars, but it's not two and a half to one.

**Ms Poole:** I assume the Ministry of Housing has done an analysis of the Clayton Research proposal. Could you highlight some of the different methodology used than perhaps the Ministry of Housing is using, because even granted what you've said about the different clientele and looking at things such as overcrowding and looking at people in homes who own their homes who are in need, and lifting people out of core need as opposed to just kind of putting the finger in the dike, I still can't quite get a grip on why there's such an enormous difference.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** There's no difference. We have no question about their methodology.

**Ms Poole:** You're looking at entirely different apples and oranges?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's right. We have no questions with their methodology. I think what's important

to understand is what it is they seek to do in the report, and it's a very limited goal, which is to take a given amount of money and distribute it among core need households on an even basis. That's essentially all they've done. It does not purport to provide what is provided in what they see as the alternative, which is the assistance that we provide through non-profit housing. Dan?

**Mr Burns:** Sorry, I was exchanging signals with Mr Sparling.

We've obviously read and reflected on the study, but you asked whether we had done an analysis, which is a particular use of words, whether we'd gone back—

**Ms Poole:** Either informally or formally.

**Mr Burns:** We have not, as far as I know, sat down with Greg Lampert and Clayton and carefully gone through all his building blocks and looked at alternative ways of looking at it, which is what you would have to do to do a full analysis. What we have done is had the report reviewed by members of our staff who are familiar with the discourse on shelter allowances, and had in effect some work done out of that only; that is, looking at it and just thinking about it a little bit, which leads to the conclusions the minister just enunciated.

To go beyond that and say, if you took the view that you should take these households, move them all out of core need and that should be done in real market conditions and not on arbitrary assumptions as in the report, as to what would that cost—I'm speculating that's the line of reasoning you're following—we have not done that kind of analytical work.

**Ms Poole:** The other thing that came to mind when I was reading their report is that you already have existing non-profit housing and I would make the assumption, whether erroneous or not, that the Conservative Party is not talking about emptying those buildings in order to give them some sort of rent supplement in privately existing—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Or getting rid of the existing rent supplement program or getting rid of the massive subsidy that goes to housing needs through the social assistance system, which was \$2.5 billion a year last year; it'll be more this year.

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**Ms Poole:** So what the minister referred to yesterday as an add-on.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Ms Poole:** Are we basically then talking, say, the 20,000 for the Jobs Ontario Homes program that have not to this date been constructed?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That was the approach that was taken.

**Ms Poole:** I think you have to factor out what is already there to a large degree, certainly as far as non-

profit housing is concerned, because that is there. It's in place. It isn't going to be changed. What we're looking at are future ways of delivering non-profit housing, or delivering shelter, more specifically, and making sure that it both meets the needs and is cost-effective.

One of the concerns I have that was actually pointed out in the auditor's report in this regard is that we do have a significant number of vacancies already existing in our non-profit housing, and this tends to be more in what they call the market rent units, because quite frankly nobody wants to pay that market rent right now.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It's only in the market rent units.

**Ms Poole:** That's right, but we have a particular problem because we have units sitting empty and yet we have people on waiting lists.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Ms Poole:** Yet the provincial government would not want to spend the extra amount of subsidy it would take in order to give them either a shallow or a deep subsidy. Has the Ministry of Housing—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It's not just a question of money. It's also a question of the mixed-income goal, which has been the goal of non-profit housing in Ontario.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, and I certainly comprehend that, but the question I was going to ask the minister is, given the fact that we do still have thousands and thousands of people on the waiting lists who are desperate for housing, and given the fact that we have these vacant units right now at the same time as we're going ahead and building 20,000 more, has the ministry come up with any type of strategy for dealing with those vacant units?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'll tell you an interesting story before I answer the general question. I was in Hamilton just over a week ago making an announcement about the social housing energy renovation program, and learned from the manager of Paradise Road development, I think it was called, that the seven units of market rent housing which had remained vacant for some time had been filled recently, because he was able to tell people that the renovations being done under the energy retrofit would lower what had been \$500- to \$600-a-month heating bills during the winter period. So some relief will come that way for some market units.

There is a vacancy rate overall, as I recollect it, of about 8% currently among all the market units that exist in the system. This is higher than we would like to see and it is something that the ministry is tackling directly in terms of trying to come up with the best ideas about how to address the problem.

It is a problem in two senses. It is a problem in the sense that the financing of non-profit housing developments includes an expectation of a certain level of rent from the market units. If that level of rent is not forthcoming because there are vacant units, then that throws



out the repayment rate on the mortgages. The second problem is that we're not achieving our goal of having mixed-income development, which for policy reasons we have chosen to do.

Peter, would you like to comment on the thoughts of the ministry at this stage? I shouldn't say "thoughts" as if it were so vague.

**Mr Peter Schafft:** Thank you. I'm the—

**The Chair:** Just a moment, Mr Schafft. Do you wish to pursue this line of questioning? You have five more minutes.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, I actually would like to know if you have any plans—maybe, that is better than "thoughts"—for dealing with the 8% vacancy.

**The Chair:** We knew you had thoughts, Peter, but we want more specific—

**Ms Poole:** We want concrete plans, agendas.

**Mr Schafft:** We've lots of thoughts and some concrete plans. Obviously, the minister is very correct. In the program, what we are attempting to do is to have an appropriate mix within the portfolio. Normally, non-profits do have what we call targeting plans. The plans actually allow for that overall plan to have an integrated approach between those that are on the deep core, the shallow core and then the market component.

With what's happening in the different marketplaces, in some cases obviously you are getting market vacancies. What we're trying to encourage with people is to have that flexibility. Rather than keeping units vacant, you have a temporary plan to house people who are on the RGI side in those units. At the same time, we're also trying to assist in providing the expertise, to say that maybe it's a marketing problem as well. Some of the groups perhaps may not be marketing the units to their best advantage, so when it's also many questions about marketing ability, giving them the expertise or tips or guidelines as to what to do.

The other point is really a future aspect of making sure you know exactly what's going on in the marketplace. You can be aware and anticipate. If in fact you see things happening in the marketplace, you start reacting to those early on so you can come up with a plan. I guess the key words for the ministry at the moment are, "Be flexible, try to work it through the piece and try to minimize any losses in revenue."

**Ms Poole:** I actually have no problem at all with the Ministry of Housing being flexible. I think, in this condition, that's exactly what's called for.

You mentioned that there are temporary plans to house RGI tenants in the market units until such time as the market units would be appropriately filled.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** This is not comprehensive. This is selective.

**Ms Poole:** Having appreciated that comment from

the minister, none the less, I'm wondering how flexible you are going to be. For instance, in a particular project where it is suitable for moving in some additional RGI tenants, do you have an outside time limit for when you would insist that they revert to market rents?

**Mr Schafft:** I think basically what you want to do is attempt at all opportunities. One of the other major factors of course is what is happening at the market rent level that's being charged, how it is comparable to what is going on in the sector as well. If you're excessively high or whatever rate, you might want to consider that again as one of the marketing areas.

We would encourage the groups to try to attempt to do all the other activities first, the marketing, to see if they are competitive normally within the marketplace, to encourage all the applicants around, to encourage the vehicles of exposure, really the marketing aspect, to any agencies, the private sector, whatever opportunities there are. Really, it is as a last resort in a sense also. It's not a long-term objective but a short-term objective, so they can work on a plan to ultimately get back to their original targeting plan. But on an interim basis, they can do some housing of RGI tenants, yes.

**Ms Poole:** So the flexibility of that particular project will probably depend on their financial viability, how much they can reduce rents and still meet their targets.

**Mr Schafft:** Yes. Each regional office works with the individual non-profits to say what is best for them. To have a blanket approach, to say this is the only answer across the province, would be inappropriate, so it's specifically directed towards the individual non-profit.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I was very impressed in Hamilton. The project manager is a relatively new project manager and had taken on the task of aggressively marketing those units, including making it clear to the prospective households who would be tenants that there was going to be a change in the heating and that the costs were going to go down, and that filled up the units.

**Ms Poole:** One last comment on that particular one. It really, really bothers me to see those units sit vacant, and I suspect it bothers most people, particularly when at the same time you're going to fairly significant cost to build new units, yet you see vacant units while our subsidized waiting list grows and people are in desperate need.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It is anathema.

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**Ms Poole:** I am pleased to see—and I'm not the critic for Housing any more; there is a God in the heavens—as an opposition person that the Ministry of Housing is trying to redress that and is showing flexibility. I certainly think that's what's needed in the situation.



**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Poole. Mrs Marland.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, I could perhaps, as Ms Marland begins, indicate that we've checked and the information on a project-by-project or development-by-development refinancing scheme is available. We will produce it for her. There will be no problem.

**Mrs Marland:** Great, thank you.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** You're most welcome.

**Mrs Marland:** That last was 25 minutes. You know what I think?

**The Chair:** Mrs Marland, it was 25 minutes because Ms Poole patiently watched you take five additional minutes, which I then gave—

**Mrs Marland:** That's what I was going to mention.

**The Chair:** —to the governing party, and which meant Ms Poole was entitled to 25 minutes. It's the responsibility of the Chair to make sure all members are treated fairly, and thank you for allowing me to inform all members of what I had done.

**Mrs Marland:** That's good, thank you. I think what I'm going to do is, I'm worried I won't get these all on the record, so I think I may wade into some—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Go ahead.

**Mrs Marland:** —and give you copies, as long as you can assure me I'll get the answers.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Well, we have to know the questions first.

**Mrs Marland:** Right. All right, I want to get to the more interesting ones, but anyway—the estimates show an expenditure of \$81.5 million for 24,530 units in the rent supplement program, or an average cost of \$3,322 each. This is obviously far cheaper than new non-profit units but is still much higher than the average for a full shelter allowance program, such as that proposed by Clayton.

The reason is partly that landlords in the past have had incentive to enrol buildings in rent supplement only where they had vacancy problems, for example, high-rent buildings. Providing shelter allowance funds directly to tenants, allowing them to select any accommodation they want in their price range would eliminate this problem, cutting even this low program cost in half.

What is the minister afraid of? Why will she not at least take up the landlords on their long-standing offer of 20,000 average-rent units to add to the existing rent supplement program and allow an independent evaluation after one year to compare both the long- and short-term efficiency of shelter allowances versus non-profit housing?

Minister, apparently that offer was made two or three years ago, before either you or I were in these portfolios, so it will be interesting to get that answer.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If I could, I'd like to answer the question.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** May I?

**The Chair:** Oh, by all means.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** All right. I want Ms Marland to understand that the offer of landlords is one that is continuous. Every day, even at my home, there are calls from landlords who are anxious to have the Ministry of Housing pick up some of the expense that would be involved in having tenants with low income rent their units. That's not an issue.

One can arrange a program like that, one can do it as has been suggested in the Clayton report, one can do it in a different kind of way, for example, the way it has been done in the Ministry of Housing, adding up to \$81 million-plus for this year. There are a number of ways you can do it.

The question is, do you want to do it? Do you want to take moneys that would otherwise be invested in the creation of new non-profit housing—and it is an investment—and eliminate that program or that portion of the program, and devote it to rent payments in the private market?

If you do that, you pay a price. You pay the price of not creating new affordable supply. You also pay the price, if you follow the Clayton method, of providing a subsidy of \$114 a month to a couple of hundred thousand, almost 300,000 households, which will then get spent in the private market, where those households can find a unit. They won't all find a suitable unit and they certainly won't find a unit that takes them out of core need in housing. These are two different questions.

**Mrs Marland:** I guess there's probably a high level of frustration for the minister with my questions and there's a high level of frustration for me in asking them, because we both come from a different ideology, and I think that we're never going to win that discussion about what it is you're doing and what it is I'm asking you about.

So I think I'll just stick to the questions where I need information from the ministry, because you and I ideologically are poles apart. I respect your choice and I hope that you respect mine, but we'll never agree, so we might as well deal with the questions where I need information.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** All right, that's fair enough. I just want to make it clear that I truly believe that to try to study cost-effectiveness and compare cost-effectiveness of two totally different programs with two totally different objectives is not possible. There is no laboratory which is going to make these things comparable. They are totally different programs with totally different objectives.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. Given the difference in costs, based on the information that you have, how does the minister justify her actions under the expenditure control

plan of cancelling the 600 new rent supplement units for 1993-94, which is apparently vote 1702 on page 94, while continuing far more costly non-profit units?

Could the minister please provide us with copies of the following: all studies in the ministry's possession which assess shelter allowance policy options, programs costs etc, for both Ontario and other jurisdictions. Now, I remember asking that question last year and the year before, and I remember that you said you had studies on shelter allowance programs in other jurisdictions. So we're just asking you for your current ones, because we actually never received the other ones.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** You did not receive them?

**Mrs Marland:** No.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We can certainly provide you with studies. We have not undertaken a huge study within the ministry, but we certainly have access to studies which I think would be of interest to you.

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you. The thing is that I guess we feel if you're assessing shelter allowance policy options and programs costs for Ontario and other jurisdictions, you must be doing that in order to decide that it isn't what you want to do. Could we also have all studies in the ministry's possession that assess the feasibility of removing or phasing out rent controls, both in Ontario and other jurisdictions?

In March the Ontario Housing Corp gave its non-union staff who earned less than \$63,525 a 2% raise and additional merit increases up to 3%. When my leader, Mike Harris, raised this matter in the Legislature in May, the minister defended the 5% hikes for certain staff of the Ontario Housing Corp. Even though the minister supported the Ontario Housing Corp's decision to award 5% pay increases, the Premier said he believed the raises were "inappropriate," and the Ontario Housing Corp board was "out to lunch." Those are quotes, by the way, attributable to the Premier about the 5% increases of the Ontario Housing Corp.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Can I just comment on that very briefly?

**Mrs Marland:** Can I just finish the question—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, sure.

**Mrs Marland:** —because otherwise we're going to—

**The Chair:** I'd prefer you finish the question and let the minister respond.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** As long as we don't lap into another question before I get a chance to reply.

**Mrs Marland:** I think we have an option about how we do this, and I just want to finish this.

**The Chair:** We're trying to help each other here, so please proceed, Mrs Marland.

**Mrs Marland:** It was the Premier who said he believed the raises were inappropriate and the Ontario

Housing Corp board was out to lunch. Indeed, last week the Bob Rae government passed Bill 48, which will require the payroll costs to be reduced by 5% across the broader public sector. Unless other sectoral agreements are reached, employees will be required to take 12 days leave without pay per year.

**1700**

Minister, do you believe, to quote your own words that, "The Ontario Housing Corp board is operating in a fiscally responsible manner and in keeping with the government's measures to lower their provincial debt"?

In recent months, there have been ads in government job publications for open competitions at the Ontario Housing Corp. This is very strange when almost all job competitions are now restricted to civil servants in order to accommodate those who are losing their jobs because of the expenditure control plan. Can the minister tell us why it is business as usual at the Ontario Housing Corp? Why is the—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I won't get a chance to answer.

**Mrs Marland:** Let me just finish.

**The Chair:** We're going to have another day of this, Minister, so we have lots of time.

**Mrs Marland:** Why is the development assistance for social housing grants considered a capital expenditure on vote—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Could I answer the first question?

**The Chair:** Minister—excuse me, please.

**Mrs Marland:** Go ahead.

**The Chair:** Minister, I think Mrs Marland indicated that she'd like to get as many of her questions on the record and then—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, but—

**The Chair:** Minister, we'll let Mrs Marland get her questions on the record. This is very helpful in the front end of the process. We still have four hours to—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** When do I get a chance to respond to Mrs Marland?

**The Chair:** When the Chair recognizes you. Please proceed.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** When will that be?

**The Chair:** When you're recognized.

Mrs Marland, finish your questions, then I will ask the minister, who's obviously expressing an interest to be recognized. But I would just let Mrs Marland—she's only got another page left—get her questions on. I know you're making notes here so that you haven't lost track of the questions.

**Mrs Marland:** I'll give this to the deputy.

**The Chair:** Do you have many more questions to read into the record, Mrs Marland?

**Mrs Marland:** No. Why is development assistance



for social housing grants considered a capital expenditure? It's vote 1702, item 16, \$1,045,000. Shouldn't this be considered an operating expenditure? In my own community, the Peel Non-Profit Housing Corp recently delayed approving its 1993 budget until it can appeal to the Minister of Housing the provincial government's decision to put a moratorium on its contributions to reserve funds.

In 1992, as a cost-cutting measure, the Ontario government put a two-year moratorium on these contributions. Peel Non-Profit Housing Corp is concerned about how to finance the future maintenance of its 45 buildings. Over the past three years, the province's contribution to the corporation's reserve funds has dropped as follows: 1991, \$1.28 million; 1992, \$363,000; 1993, zero.

I understand that the ministry does intend to reintroduce the fund contribution next year but that it will be limited by 10% of the previous maximum allowed. As a result of its concerns, the board of the Peel Non-Profit Housing Corp may be reluctant to approve new projects, even though the waiting list for assisted housing in Peel has grown by 29% in the past year to more than 11,000 households on their waiting list.

If the provincial government shifts responsibility for social housing maintenance from the province to local governments, resulting in an increase in property taxes, there could be an erosion of political and public support for the housing provided by Peel Non-Profit Housing Corp. Already there is considerable concern about social housing concentration in Mississauga.

Minister, why are you bringing more units of non-profit housing on stream if housing corporations cannot afford to maintain their existing stock? Is it not vital that we maintain the public's investment in the housing that has already been built?

When we talk about the Peel Non-Profit Housing Corp, we talk about the first non-profit housing corporation in Canada and today by far the largest. All of their projects are highly successful, extremely well managed and all of the people who live in those buildings are very happy. Our concern is that if the maintenance is not affordable, other than putting it on the property tax base or being delayed, then what has been a very successful program under that corporation will be at risk.

What was the total cost of the ministry's advertising campaign regarding changes to rent control law following the passage of Bill 121? Also, could I please have the cost breakdowns for each medium: television, radio and print.

I have some questions concerning vote 1704, the rent regulation program. On page 85, your chart of the rent control applications workload shows that at the end of

fiscal 1992-93, there was a significant increase in the number of applications from both tenants and landlords that were outstanding at the year's end. Outstanding tenant's applications increased from 3,764 at the end of 1991-92 to 4,507 at the end of 1992-93. Landlords' applications increased from 475 remaining at the end of 1991-92 to 1,275 remaining at the end of 1992-93. By the end of the current fiscal year, the number of applications from tenants will have risen even further, to 5,007.

What is the ministry doing to ensure that there is not a backlog of rent control applications? Looking further down the road, can we anticipate that the number of outstanding applications will drop? I have heard that landlords faced a tenfold increase in the amount of paperwork for transitional applications under the Rent Control Act, 1992, compared to the paperwork required under the Residential Rent Regulation Act, 1986, which was the law before Bill 4.

Minister, is an increase in paperwork contributing to a backlog of the rent control applications and, if so, is there some way this paperwork can be streamlined to benefit all parties: landlords, tenants and the ministry employees?

Minister, in 1991 your predecessor, Mr Cooke, removed the permanent residency requirement for social housing; in other words, people who are in Ontario and in need of assisted housing but do not have permanent resident status, for instance, applicants for refugee status who are awaiting hearings to assess their applications, are now eligible for social housing. I have been told that because of the point system used to determine placement in social housing, people who do not have permanent resident status are more likely to be placed in social housing than permanent residents, many of whom have been on housing waiting lists for years.

We need to know: Is this actually happening? If so, what is being done to ensure that permanent residents who are in need of assisted housing are being treated equitably?

The Minister of Health is considering changes that would limit the eligibility of OHIP to Ontarians who have permanent resident status. Does your ministry, the Ministry of Housing, intend to review its policy on residency status?

**The Chair:** I think, Mrs Marland, you meant to say that the Ministry of Health is considering restricting benefits to persons with non-resident status. Is that not correct?

**Mrs Marland:** No. The Ministry of Health is considering changes that would limit the eligibility for OHIP coverage to people who are permanent residents of Ontario.

**Ms Poole:** It's restricting to instead of restricting of it.

**The Chair:** I apologize. I wasn't clear on that.



**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It doesn't matter. There's no point in our speculating on that.

**Mrs Marland:** What, on the OHIP thing?

**The Chair:** Mrs Marland, you have completed your 20 minutes. We're going to return, but I have to adjourn because we're called to the House for a vote. We will reconvene as soon as the vote is taken. This committee stands momentarily adjourned.

*The committee recessed at 1710 and resumed at 1732.*

**The Chair:** As I recall, Mrs Marland, you had just completed your 20-minute cycle. The minister has registered with me a concern.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, I need to understand how we are proceeding here. When Mrs Marland began her questions, I had indicated that I was prepared to answer them as she went along. However, under your guidance, what she did was use her complete rotation in order to place all her questions.

As I don't have an allocation of time on this committee to respond, what that would mean, in effect, is that all the answers that can be given to the questions which she raised could only be given outside this committee. First of all, I need to understand, what is your purpose in the process we're following?

**The Chair:** My purpose is to act as a Chair, and it's set out in the standing orders. You'd be familiar with that. Your second question was?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** My second question is, do you intend to proceed so that every time it's Mrs Marland's turn, or any other member's, for that matter, when there are questions raised by that member, there's no opportunity for the minister to respond and therefore any responses have to be given outside this committee?

**The Chair:** The Chair has no real opinion in the matter. I am guided by the wishes of the committee. You are not a member of the committee.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's right.

**The Chair:** You're here at the request of the committee and at the pleasure of the committee. The House leaders have confirmed the ministries we have chosen. When the committee chose to act in rotation, it's by time allocation. It has been the custom and the understanding of this committee that the member can use that time as they see fit.

If I might be helpful to the minister with her quandary, I have seen occasions where ministers have utilized their rotation from the governing party to clarify points that they feel impelled to respond to. But if Mrs Marland chooses to spend her time putting questions on the record and does not provide you with sufficient time to answer them, that is her conscious choice. The detail in which you wish to respond to any of her questions, in writing, is entirely a matter between you and your

staff and your assurances to the committee that the responses will be forthcoming.

That has been the process, and I don't believe Mrs Marland is going to take an hour of her time reading questions into the record, but if she chose in the front end of the process to put on the record those questions so that later today or next week when we reconvene that you and your staff will have time to reflect on those questions and then give a fuller answer, then I'm sure time will be allocated, but the Chair is guided by the committee's desire to divide its time by caucus and, therefore, each caucus gets to use its time as it sees fit.

**Mrs Marland:** I just wish to make a brief comment to try to be helpful in addressing the concerns of the minister. Before I started asking my questions, I asked if I could go ahead and go through them and could I have the written answers, at which time the minister and the deputy both said yes.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No. No, in fact, Margaret—

**The Chair:** Minister, please. If only out of courtesy, let's listen to one at a time.

**Mrs Marland:** We didn't have a problem last year. Last year I tabled questions, frankly, because we were running out of time. I think the minister's concern is that her answers don't become part of the record. I have noticed in other estimates and in other committees, including the public accounts committee, that the answers can be tabled with the clerk, addressed to the Chair through the clerk, and every person on the committee receives a copy of those answers. Am I correct, Tonia?

**Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum):** Yes.

**The Chair:** The record will show the clerk confirms that. However, if I can just get this back to the initial point, which is that the minister wants to know how we are proceeding, and that's a fair question. I suspect, Mrs Marland, if you can assure the minister that there'll be time for her to provide responses, that that was part of your approach to these estimates, she did want to know if she would be given time while it's allocated to you to respond. I think that's a reasonable request. I don't know if we have to dwell on that point too terribly long; the committee determines the procedures here. It's not negotiated with the minister.

**Mrs Marland:** I wouldn't have gone ahead and read my questions into the record if I hadn't had the assurance that I would have received the answers in writing if we were out of time. In fact, I have furnished the minister's staff with a complete written copy in order to facilitate their being able to give the answers.

**The Chair:** I did not know that. Had you informed the Chair that you had given them a copy, I might have suggested that if you're going to ensure that your questions are read into the record, then I believe we

should give the minister some time to respond. I thought the reason for reading into the record was that you didn't have a copy to give to the staff. That would only be more helpful.

**Mrs Marland:** I gave them my copy after I read it.

**The Chair:** All right. I'll recognize the minister in a moment, but the Chair really would like to return to the process of estimates. I don't think we have the difficulty here as much as we need to ensure that there is—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, if I might.

**The Chair:** Yes, Madam Minister.

1740

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Thank you. Mrs Marland suggests that I was agreeable to her reading the questions into the record, tabling with us a set of written questions and providing written responses. She misunderstood. I'm not agreeable to that.

I am agreeable to her reading questions as long as when there is time on her allocation or her party's allocation, I have a chance to respond to them on the record. I have never heard of any other way of putting material on the record. And I am not prepared to undertake that staff of the Ministry of Housing will sit down and have to write essays in response to Mrs Marland's—

**Mrs Marland:** You did it last year.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, but I'm not prepared this year to do that because I think the way this is proceeding is really to put in question the purpose of a committee. The purpose of a committee surely is to ask questions and have some responses. It is not to set a written test for ministry staff to which they have to reply in essay form. I want Mrs Marland to understand that very clearly.

**The Chair:** Madam Minister, I must reinforce the notion that you are here at the pleasure of the committee and you're obligated by the House leaders and the Legislative Assembly Act to come and be prepared to respond in the manner in which this committee asks you to.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I am.

**The Chair:** Your recent expression of intransigence—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, no intransigence.

**The Chair:** Look, Madam Minister, I wish you wouldn't put me into an awkward position here. If you have all of a sudden this year determined you wish to do your estimates differently—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, last year I was permitted time to respond to questions during the estimates. I'm quite prepared to have the staff prepare written responses for material which we don't have available here. When we have that material available, when I can

answer the questions, then we are entering a totally new process. If we're going to have—

**The Chair:** I'm going to cut you off, Madam Minister, because you're repeating yourself. This committee is not prepared to be advised how it orders up its business.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm not prepared to have you tell me that this is a written exam.

**The Chair:** No one's said that. Those are your words.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's what it amounts to.

**The Chair:** We were soliciting your assistance in our responsibility to examine—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We can test this.

**The Chair:** —Madam Minister, please—to examine the estimates of your ministry.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm here for that purpose. I'm not here to listen to questions be read into the record and not be allowed to respond.

**The Chair:** Madam Minister, please. You have the capacity to be courteous to this committee. We know that. You have expressed that in the past.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It's a mutual obligation, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** I am guided by the standing orders of this committee and by the full authority of this committee and I am sorry that I have to constantly reinforce that with you in this presence.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We can test that, Mr Chair, if you're prepared to move ahead in this manner. I'm just telling you my understanding of the purpose of my being here. Otherwise, why should I be here?

**The Chair:** Madam Minister, perhaps you enjoy being argumentative. I have indicated, as the Chair, that we are prepared to proceed. I have indicated that there are opportunities to pacify your concerns. You insist on arguing this.

**Mr Norm Jamison (Norfolk):** Point of order, Mr Chair. I feel, as a member, that information coming from this committee should be a public record and this is one of the purposes for the committee. I think the minister has made it clear to you—

**The Chair:** What's the point of order, Mr Jamison?

**Mr Jamison:** That the answers to the questions should be allowed time to be answered verbally here in committee for that purpose. I believe that is one of the very relevant points about committee work, to make sure the public record is served and the questions are answered here so the public has access to those very vital and concerning questions.

**The Chair:** I'm waiting for your point of order.

**Mr Jamison:** Each member of this committee—

**The Chair:** You're out of order, Mr Jamison. I



asked you three times to place what your point of order was. If you wish to debate this issue, ask me to debate the issue, but that's not a point of order.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chairman, it is a point of order.

**Ms Poole:** Mr Chair, on a point of clarification.

**The Chair:** Yes, a point of clarification.

**Ms Poole:** Might I ask a question? I am not a regular member of the estimates committee. I have sat on estimates a number of times and we have done it in a manner that if there's give and take on the questions, then at the end we table all the ones that haven't been answered.

**The Chair:** That is correct.

**Ms Poole:** I'm just wondering, is it normally up to each individual member or caucus to determine how they want to conduct the estimates or is there a committee procedure that you normally follow?

**The Chair:** By consensus and by precedent, we have been proceeding in this fashion for some time.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** What fashion?

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Minister, I'm responding to a point of clarification from Mrs Poole. That has been a certain degree of flexibility in determining that during the time allocated to us, some being limited, some out of convenience to ministers who can't be in attendance and so on and so forth, fuller responses will be made available. This has been done quite frequently and in fact was done with virtually all of our estimates.

The minister has indicated that she's not prepared to proceed in that fashion. I think what we're debating here is just how much she's going to be called upon, because as I recall, my first question to the minister today was, did you have any of the responses requested from yesterday that you're prepared to respond to? The minister was given time to respond to those questions. Had she been focused on the process, she would have recognized that that time did not count against anybody's caucus. That was given to the minister as time to respond to the questions.

This is not good enough, apparently, for the minister, since this was the procedure I thought we were operating with. Tomorrow, when we begin, if she has any written responses or any fuller responses that are required, she'll be given that time. But I'm hearing that this is not appropriate for this minister.

**Ms Poole:** I'm just trying to understand the difficulty. I think the difference is that yesterday the minister had an opportunity to give a brief response and then said she would provide further information. But in this particular instance, the minister hasn't had a chance even for a brief response of her own opinion, as well as backing it up at a later date with more ministry documentation.

I, for one, don't have any objection. I can understand Mrs Marland doesn't want a lot of her time taken up with long, weighty answers, but if the minister was given a brief opportunity to respond, I don't think—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That is not allowed.

**The Chair:** No, the minister is. There are two issues here: One is, will the minister be given an opportunity to respond; and, are the minister and her deputy still agreeable to providing some written responses? Those are the two separate issues here.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Minister. As I hear your statements, I indicated that there will be time for you to respond to Mrs Marland. She used her full 20 minutes and I'm here to recognize the NDP. When it comes to Mrs Marland's rotation, you'll be given an opportunity to respond to her questions.

**Mr Jamison:** Mr Chair, point of order: Will that be on the record or will it be off the record?

**The Chair:** It'll be on the record. I just have to—

**Ms Poole:** I thank you for clarifying that. I didn't understand that myself. I didn't understand the minister would have an opportunity in the next rotation.

**The Chair:** I indicated that the minister would have opportunity and I doubted seriously if Mrs Marland was going to try to use all of her time reading questions into the record. I didn't believe that was the case. The minister wanted an absolute response at this moment. When we were unable to give her an absolute response, we were advised that the offer to assist was being withdrawn.

Now, that still leaves open the issue of whether or not the ministry will respond to some written requests that are the custom for this committee to request, and they do form exhibits to this committee. It remains to be seen if the minister will cooperate, but the minister will be given an opportunity to respond.

Now, I would like to go back to the rotation.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I asked when I would. Have you told me when?

**The Chair:** I think I've given you a couple of clues, if you've been listening to me, Madam Minister. I indicated that tomorrow—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** I'm sorry; at our next meeting day, when your staff have come forward with some of the responses—they don't necessarily have to be in written form, but as long as your time is—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Ah.

**The Chair:** But that is exactly the way we've been operating.

**Mrs Marland:** With all ministries.

**The Chair:** With all ministries. But we still have



several hours of time left here, please.

**Mr Jamison:** Mr Chair—

**The Chair:** It had better be a point of order, Mr Jamison, because if it isn't, I wish to recognize Mr Lessard and then you in terms of—

**Mr Jamison:** Just a thought here, Mr Chair, with all due respect. The number of questions that Mrs Marland has put forward indicate that it would take a lengthy period of time to answer those questions appropriately, and I still believe it's crucial that the minister be able to have her remarks recorded on those questions.

1750

**The Chair:** Mr Jamison, I'm sorry. We're taking up time that the minister, I understand, wants to respond here.

**Mr Jamison:** That's a legitimate question, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** This is going to be an editorial comment from the Chair, but I have seen occasions where critics have waited to the 11th hour and then put dozens and dozens of questions on and not given the minister time. As I indicated, it was helpful to the process to get these questions on the record, up front and early—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No, Mr Jamison—

**Mrs Marland:** There are two and a half hours next week.

**The Chair:** Mr Jamison, you're not listening. I'm trying to explain to you that you get your questions on the record and you're given time to respond. The minister wanted to respond when Mrs Marland's time had finished. If the minister is willing to now utilize some of her time—that was offered to her as well; use some of her caucus colleagues' time—to respond to that, I'm offering that to her. I've given her three opportunities.

**Mr Jamison:** That's totally inappropriate, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** That's fine, then she'll wait until she has an opportunity to respond to Mrs Marland.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** All I asked was when that opportunity was, Mr Chair. I said that in the first place.

**The Chair:** I've given you three examples. Mr Lessard.

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** I'm going to ask the minister a question and give her an opportunity to respond, because I think it is important for the minister's responses to be verbally made immediately after the questions are asked.

Madam Minister, you know that in the last few years we've seen a real cutback in the federal government's support for many programs, including education and health care and social assistance, for example, but another area has been with respect to housing also, and one of the specific examples that I have is RRAP, the residential rehabilitation assistance program, that I know

has had an adverse impact in the city of Windsor. Up until this point, that program was a good balance with the province's program, the Ontario home renewal program, OHRP, and as a result of our expenditure control plan initiatives, we've eliminated the OHRP program.

I understand the reasons for taking the steps that we've had to take to limit our expenditures, but in the city of Windsor that was a program that was being accessed because the housing is very affordable, so that people who are on low incomes and seniors who depend on government support are still able to own their own homes and maintain those homes. We didn't have the same problems that other communities had, where because of the criteria, no one was making application for the funding and therefore it was going unused.

I guess my question is what our reasons were for eliminating the OHRP program and whether there may be some other types of assistance that we could provide for people, like in the city of Windsor, who are able to own their own homes to be able to maintain them.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I wish I could give a happy answer. I don't think I can.

The review that was undertaken of the Ontario home renewal program about a couple of years ago indicated, as you suggest, that uptake of the program by people living in many of the urban centres in Ontario was very low because of the income cutoff, which was just above \$20,000 per year. Most people who are in the position of home ownership in Ontario have an income greater than \$20,000 a year. So there was an accumulation of program moneys in municipal accounts. The municipalities administered the program for the province and a rather large buildup of moneys in those accounts had occurred.

When we came to the point of deciding whether to change the program so that it was more effective in being available to people who might use it—in other words, principally raising the income cutoff so that people with a somewhat higher income would be able to access the program—we had a choice to make and we decided that, given the cost of the program and the amount of money that had been sitting idle in municipal accounts and the fact that we are very squeezed for money in the ministry, this was not a priority change. In fact, we have come to the decision to retrieve moneys from municipal accounts.

We will be continuing the Ontario home renewal program for disabled people and we are also continuing the low-rise rehabilitation program, but we have decided not to revamp and continue OHRP. It really is a question of dollars and cents. You're right, it has served a purpose. It served that purpose better in times past, given the income limits on the program.

Do you want to add anything to that, Dan?

**Mr Burns:** I think the only thing I'd emphasize is that in recent years the Ontario home renewal program had a fairly low level of utilization. Its original purpose some 15 years ago had, in many ways, been successful in reaching very low-income home owners. That group has shrunk over time and so has the stock of housing they happen to own.

**Mr Lessard:** Have there been some areas of the province where the uptake in the program has still remained fairly high?

**Mr Burns:** I'm not sure I'd say fairly high anywhere. There's been some takeup, particularly in communities where the housing was originally, for example, constructed as seasonal or temporary housing in a rural or isolated setting.

Fundamentally, the group it was originally intended to reach has been reached, so the policy choice that arose was, do you revamp the program to reach a larger spectrum of folks or do you wind it up? At a time of tough choices, I guess in this case this one made more sense to wind up. But the program was getting less and less utilization and a very large portion of the funding was frankly sitting unused in reserve accounts and had been for some years.

**Mr Jamison:** I have one question. There seems to be some concern around the savings in and around the Rent Review Hearings Board. How much money has the government saved by eliminating the Rent Review Hearings Board, Madam Minister, a board that, it was argued by the official opposition, should be kept? What is the estimate or the figures if we add them on the type of savings—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm getting some expert input.

**The Chair:** Will you have a chair please, Mr Glass. You've been introduced. Welcome. You've heard the question?

**Mr Robert Glass:** I think, as the Minister pointed out yesterday, what we're talking about is quite a different program, but the hearings board costs were in the order of \$10,019,000 in 1992-93. Of course, there was the rental standards board as well, which had a budget of slightly over \$1 million. The standards board has been eliminated and the hearings board will be eliminated by 1994-95.

Because we've gone to a system of hearings and a single-level process for rent control, the expenditures in the rent control line, which were \$22 million, will rise. I believe the net savings at the end of all this will be approximately \$2.8 million, by the time the expenditures have increased slightly in the rent control area and they've been eliminated in the standards board and the hearings board.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** The reason we're phasing out the hearings board is that there are still appeals coming through from the RRRRA.

**Mr Glass:** Yes, I believe they have 950 active appeals at the present time.

**Mr Jamison:** When do you feel that process will—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** By the late fall of next year.

**Mr Glass:** Yes, they closed their first office at the beginning of January—

**The Chair:** Excuse me, I didn't mean to interrupt, but were you present yesterday when this question was raised?

**Mr Jamison:** I don't believe so.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** This question wasn't raised yesterday, I don't think.

**Ms Poole:** This question was raised. On a point of order, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** It's a point of order; I have to recognize that.

**Ms Poole:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: It's very important for the committee to have accurate information. Mr Brown asked this question yesterday as to how many appeals were held last year. The minister said zero, and we've just heard that there are 950 outstanding.

**The Chair:** There are two different things here.

**Mr Glass:** I believe the question was, how many appeals we have had under the Rent Control Act, and the answer was that there isn't an appellant body other than an appeal to court on a matter of law. We've had two requests so far.

At any rate, the board closed its office in Sudbury in January. It plans to close its office in eastern Ontario in Ottawa in December or January, at the end of this year, and the southwestern region in London, I believe, in February. They will close down their main Toronto city location in June 1994.

There will probably be a residual number of appeals that go on for a number of years, because there are a number of cases in front of the courts, and they are blocking other applications, and that could go on for some time.

Our experience with the Residential Tenancy Commission was that there were one or two commissioners for about four years.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Glass. Being 6 of the clock, this committee stands adjourned to reconvene on Tuesday, July 20.

The committee adjourned at 1802.







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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

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**Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

\*Abel, Donald (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

Bisson, Gilles (Cochrane South/-Sud N)

Carr, Gary (Oakville South/-Sud PC)

Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

\*Haeck, Christel (St Catharines-Brock ND)

\*Jamison, Norm (Norfolk ND)

\*Lessard, Wayne (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

\*Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Harrington, Margaret H. (Niagara Falls ND) for Mr Bisson

Marland, Margaret (Mississauga South/-Sud PC) for Mr Arnott

Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L) for Mr Elston

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia



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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 20 July 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 20 juillet 1993

## Standing committee on estimates

## Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Ministry of Housing

Ministère du Logement



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 20 July 1993

The committee met at 1536 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF HOUSING

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We are reconvening to continue. We have approximately three hours remaining for the Ministry of Housing.

At this point, before we go into a regular rotation, I would ask if there are any items which the minister or staff have any responses on that they were able to prepare and can circulate at this time to assist with further questioning.

**Hon Evelyn Gigantes (Minister of Housing):** Just as a point of information, we will be providing, before the afternoon is out, a bibliography on shelter allowances: shelter allowances compared to home ownership and shelter allowances compared to non-profit. Within that bibliography, members will find that various studies have been noted. They have a star in front of them. Those are studies to which the Ministry of Housing has paid particular attention.

We are also drawing out, as sources for members of the committee, studies which we think will be of interest on this issue that are Canadian based and of recent vintage. We hope those will be helpful in answering some of the questions that have been asked by members, particularly members of the opposition.

What's being circulated right now is one particular study which was done by Clayton Research, the same firm which provided the most recent study for the Fair Rental Policy Organization of Ontario. It's about home ownership as an investment, but much of the argument that is contained therein will be relevant to the question of public investment in the non-profit building program.

We will also be providing some material that I don't think we will have available today. I would like to be able to provide material to members that will allow a direct comparison between what last year's estimates projected forward over three, four years and what this year's estimates project forward over three, four years to give members of the committee an overview of how we have changed expenditure patterns within the ministry, and in fact generated a good deal of savings or constraints over this year and years to come.

**The Chair:** That's very helpful and that has been circulated and noted. If members have any questions that flow from that, they can be raised during the regular rotation. I'd like to recognize Mrs Poole then for, say, a half-hour rotation.

**Ms Dianne Poole (Eglinton):** I'd like to continue with some questions about the non-profit housing sector.

On July 14, in response to, I believe, a question from Mrs Harrington, the minister said the following two statements, and she was referring to the non-profit sector:

"The sectors are now capable of helping build guidelines for the administration and operation in an accountability framework that can mean we are not looking at every line of every budget that they're operating, that we can discuss with them ways of building in incentives to the way we provide financing for operations."

In the same response, the minister went on to say: "We also want to be able to loosen the controls that are minute-by-minute, day-by-day, line-by-line kinds of controls under which the sector has operated up to now. I think we're making some progress there. Those will be developing kind of changes."

Minister, on the one hand, it appears to me that you're saying you want to loosen the day-to-day controls. At the same time, when I look at page 117 of the estimates, which talks about the DASH grants, the development assistance for social housing, you're talking about, for instance, giving \$1 million as development assistance for social housing grants to people who don't have any expertise, to people who are first-time players. That's at the same time you're talking about loosening up the controls.

To me they seem to be going in opposite directions. How can you loosen controls when you're inviting even more players into the game without the experience, the track record, the expertise to develop social housing? I wonder if you'd like to respond to that.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes. There are two elements of the system. One is the element of the design of the system in which we can build up mechanisms by which, while providing day-by-day, month-by-month decision-making flexibility for non-profit and co-op organizations, we can still maintain a fairly rigorous accounting and accountability system around that.

The DASH grants you referred to are an initial part of the program process in which groups apply, and depending on their needs as groups, will get funding for the development process. I'm sure you're familiar with this, having been part of a government which in fact initiated the DASH grants; that came with Homes Now. Those grants are intended to help groups incorporate and give them the essentials to do the initial round of planning, do the contact with the people they will be needing to work with in a professional sense, and to choose whom they will be working with in the market.

In fact, Dan, you might like to say a few words about this.

When I talk about the areas in which we would like to see greater flexibility, I'm thinking of such things as the work that we will be doing around replacement reserves. I think I may have alluded to that in previous discussions in this committee. As we resume replacement reserves, which have been on a moratorium for a year and a half now and will continue on moratorium till the end of this fiscal year, we will be looking to develop a new system in which we expect that groups such as the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Cooperative Housing Association of Ontario will help us design a system where they will be able to make sure that priorities are being addressed within the non-profit housing system, including the co-op system, in terms of the renovation work that needs doing to keep buildings in good shape; that they will help us draw up guidelines in which there are actually incentives built in to do cost-effective work and to make sure that the work that's undertaken is done as efficiently as possible. That's what I mean about a mature third sector.

There are now organizations and experience built up in the third sector, which means that the Ministry of Housing really can look to active partners at the provincial level to help design systems which, instead of treating everybody as if they're in grade 2, treat them as if they're at least at the stage where they can control their own allowances and make some good investments within guidelines which we will seek their help in developing.

They've pointed out to us that if we're providing X amount of funding for this line item, then people will spend to X. That is a natural human response to getting a budget line of X. You spend to it. What we're interested in doing is developing the systems that will give people a benefit for finding a good way to spend X minus Y and split the difference.

**Ms Poole:** Madam Minister, I have no problem with building in incentives for people to use the money properly, wisely and efficiently. That's not what's at question. What concerns me is that we already have an overall accountability framework that quite frankly isn't working. We have operating agreements that are not in place and should be in place, operating agreements that still haven't been signed, and there are cases where there are no audited financial statements available. If you look at the auditor's report, it was very clear on a number of shortcomings in the ministry. With the difficulty that we've had in the standing committee on public accounts in getting some very vital information from the ministry, I'm not convinced that you've rectified this problem.

I'd just like to spend a few moments looking at some of the items in the auditor's report and asking some questions on those. First, I'll highlight some of the auditor's concerns.

First, despite a decline in land prices and construction costs after 1989, the cost of projects approved in 1990 and 1991 continued to increase. Secondly, the practice of using highest and best appraisal values in approving land and rental property purchases was costly. Recent land transactions were not examined before approving land values. Thirdly, the maximum unit price, MUP was not lowered to keep pace with market trends. In fact, in the absence of more competitive approaches to project selection, many project sponsors and developers viewed MUPs as the target price.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Excuse me, Dianne—

**Ms Poole:** Yes?

**Mrs Marland:** Mr Chairman, may I just ask a question?

**The Chair:** Go through the Chair, please.

**Mrs Marland:** I am going through the Chair, but I just wanted to warn Dianne. These questions that the member for Eglinton is asking are questions I have already asked. I'm wondering whether the minister is planning to give the response to my questions today, or in writing, as I previously requested, just so we don't waste time doing it twice.

**The Chair:** I'm not sure if that's very helpful to Ms Poole.

**Ms Poole:** No, actually—

**The Chair:** Ms Poole, perhaps you'd like to continue. She's been advised. Thank you, Mrs Marland.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you, Mrs Marland, but what I am doing first is highlighting the auditor's concerns. Then I have a list of specific questions arising from that. A number of them are quite different from the ones Mrs Marland asked.

The next point the auditor made was that inconsistent referral practices make it unlikely that those in need of affordable housing will be treated consistently, equitably and efficiently. Of 21 local housing authorities surveyed, only one had been consistently requested to provide referrals to local non-profit projects.

He next made the point that projects in all three regions, southern, eastern and central, had difficulty competing with the local private market and could not meet their approved targets for a designated number of market rent units. As a result, most projects had filled these market rent units with rent-geared-to-income tenants, which required higher levels of subsidies than originally approved.

Another point the auditor made was that the projects approved in 1991, totalling \$1.16 billion, would have cost over \$200 million less had approved costs dropped in line with market prices.

Now those were the basic findings of the auditor—there were others but those were the highlights—and I'd



like to ask some questions arising from those.

First of all, Minister, how many non-profit allocations have been given to co-op groups over the last year—the last two years?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Is it the last year or the last two years?

**Ms Poole:** The last two years.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'll ask staff to look that up for you while you go ahead.

**Ms Poole:** Okay. I would mention to you that during estimates last year, which I believe was last August, you indicated that in the final round of allocations under P-10,000 there was a very pronounced effort made to ensure that co-ops were getting allocations—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's correct.

**Ms Poole:** —so I'd just like that background.

Have all relevant staff been trained to examine recent land transactions prior to approving land values for projects?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, that's not complete yet. Perhaps what I'll do is ask Sue Herbert from our operations division to come up, our assistant deputy minister, operations, and respond directly to your questions. She will have the figures more quickly at hand and be more up to date on the kinds of questions that you're asking at the moment.

1550

**The Chair:** Welcome, Mrs. Herbert, you've been introduced. Please proceed.

**Mrs Suzanne Herbert:** Do we want to go back to the question of numbers? Do we have them? Patty tells me that we don't have the numbers but we will get the numbers for you on the co-op.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** You're talking about the tail-end of the P-10,000 program?

**Ms Poole:** That's right.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Or is it Homes Now?

**Ms Poole:** We want to know over the last two years what the allocations have been.

**Mrs Herbert:** We can give you that for all of the programs and sector numbers.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We can get that figure quite easily.

**Mrs Herbert:** There was a second question?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** The second question was the training of staff on the land comparison, price comparison for land.

**Mrs Herbert:** There are a number of training initiatives under way right now. One of those includes a look at land transactions in terms of both the pricing of land transactions and the examination of land transactions. Full training of all staff hasn't been completed yet, though it's under way.

**Mr Daniel Burns:** If I could just add to that, that is the training of our project coordinating staff. We do have in our technical staff appraisers who work with each regional office and have had appraisers as part of our professional technical staff for many years.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** But this is a special effort—

**Mr Burns:** This is an additional effort.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** —that is associated with the Jobs Ontario Homes program in the new design, and we are training staff at the regional office level to do a comparison of land prices and land transactions.

**Ms Poole:** Has there been an actual re-evaluation of your training program and how your appraisers are evaluating the land since the auditor's report?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** This is not a question of appraisal that we're dealing with right here. There are two issues involved. One is appraisal, which we've always had, as the deputy said, within the program and your government had, and appraisal as it happens with every property involved in the program. The auditor found some reason to question some of the appraisals that had been done during the time period 1987 to 1991, the period he looked at, and he felt that in the tail-end of that period, if there had been a quicker and more thorough comparison of land costs, we would've achieved better prices.

It has been noted both in this committee in previous estimates and in the committee dealing with the auditor's report that what the auditor was talking about was land at the tail-end of the period he surveyed which had been acquired one year to two years before he was looking at the prices. Those prices within the program had been negotiated and the appraisals done at a period one year to two years, sometimes longer, before the figures he was looking at in that year.

In other words, if a project was being looked at by the auditor in terms of its final costs in 1991, the land associated with that project would've been acquired probably before 1990. In other words, it would've been at 1989 prices.

**Ms Poole:** Madam Minister, I'd have to take issue with you on that particular point because what the auditor said very clearly was that in the latter boom 1980s he could understand the pressures to acquire housing and why the ministry may have had to approve deals which were extremely expensive.

What the auditor found most distressing was that when we went into a recession, when the price of land started to fall in early 1990, in fact in late 1989, at that stage he would have assumed the ministry would have re-evaluated what it was willing to pay for land and, in the auditor's opinion, in 1991 that did not occur.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If I could just say for one moment, we are taking what the auditor had to say very much as guidance. In other words, we intend to do what

he thought should have been done. It is for that purpose we are preparing staff at regional offices with the programs that will help them to determine whether the land prices which are being proposed for non-profit projects are land prices which jibe with the current market. That does not guarantee that if land prices go down 25% in the next two years those land prices won't look strange two years from now in the final accounts on the project. You understand what I'm saying.

**Ms Poole:** I understand exactly.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Very good.

**Ms Poole:** Madam Minister, I'm not stupid. A non-profit project will take around two years to put up.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Very good.

**Ms Poole:** Madam Minister, I do not like your condescending tone. I understand exactly what's happening.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm not being condescending at all. I just want to make sure we're talking about the same thing.

**Ms Poole:** The auditor was very clear that the problem he had was that the ministry was not changing with the times. I think what we're all concerned with is that land is evaluated at the proper amount at the proper time.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That is precisely the process we are going through now in terms of training and providing staff with the kind of information systems that will allow them to do that as a regular course. Dan is dying to say something.

**The Chair:** Deputy, jump in.

**Mr Burns:** The subject that has just been raised was discussed at some length at public accounts, and I just want to touch on two important features of that discussion.

When you take apart the land component of a development and the construction component and track each of them separately against market conditions, what happened in the period of time we're now discussing is that the construction part tracked the Canadian construction index pretty well.

The land component didn't drop as fast as it did in the private market because the land component we allowed and approved in our projects didn't rise as fast as the private market. The private market in the GTA reached between \$60,000 and \$80,000 a unit for ownership land at the peak. We never approved anything over \$40,000.

It's not surprising that if you combine the two back again, which is what happens in the maximum unit price system we now have, our rate of decline was not equal to the rate of decline in the condominium sector, and it should not have been. The reason is that our rate of increase was not the same as that experienced in the

condominium sector. However, having said that, the discussion about professional practice is an important one and the training program is under way.

You also asked about professional advice. Yes, we have sought professional advice outside our own technically professional staff to look at appropriate practices in today's market conditions, which is what both the minister and Mrs Herbert alluded to.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** But, again, that will not assure that if land is acquired this year for a project and land prices drop two years from now—it will also mean those land prices will look high on the final capital costs of the project. That's a fact of life.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, and I don't think we have any quarrel with that. It's whether the price being paid for that land at that time is in sync with what is being paid in private deals.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Ms Poole:** I think that's what people want to be assured of.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We are fully in accord with the auditor on that. It is what we want to see. We are providing as quickly and as capably as we can—and I think it's going to be quite capably and relatively quickly—the strength within the regional offices to deal with transactions that way.

I should also point out that we will be dividing the land part of projects from the construction costs, which will allow us to target land prices in a way that has not been done in the program previously.

**Ms Poole:** I'd like to switch to a slightly different subject again under non-profit housing in the auditor's report, and that relates to the operating agreements and operating budgets. The auditor was quite critical because of the number of instances in which operating agreements and budgets were not in place.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Right.

**Ms Poole:** Could you tell me, do all non-profit housing projects that have been completed and are in operation have operating agreements in place at this time?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Do you want to speak to this, Sue?

**Mrs Herbert:** The auditor addressed operating agreements in a number of sectors, so if I can just break them into sectors for you, in the cooperative sector we've negotiated an operating agreement. It's been recommended by the provincial association and we're in the process of signing those across the province. So there's a variable. In some locations they're signed, in others we're just in the process of signing them now. From our perspective, it's just the processing of those agreements now. There is an agreement that has been implemented, of course, out in the field.



1600

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It's a sectoral agreement.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, but to date it is still not signed?

**Mrs Herbert:** No. We sign them with individual operators. So once we have a province-wide agreement that the provincial association—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** The umbrella.

**Mrs Herbert:** —an umbrella agreement, then we have to go out and individually sign it with each operator in the province.

**Ms Poole:** So you've reached an agreement with CHAO.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's right.

**Mrs Herbert:** Yes.

**Ms Poole:** And now you are in the process of having every individual co-op sign it.

**Mrs Herbert:** It's out in our regional offices.

**Ms Poole:** It's a standard agreement?

**Mrs Herbert:** That's right.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Mrs Herbert:** We have had for some time an operating agreement with the federal-provincial non-profit programs. Most of those are signed. There may be some few exceptions out there.

**Ms Poole:** Just before you continue, could I ask you to give me, obviously at a later date, some sense of how many of those federal-provincial agreements are not in place?

**Mrs Herbert:** Yes, we can do that for you. And on our provincial unilateral programs in the non-profit area—that's the programs that we fund 100% ourselves—we are just in the process of negotiating an umbrella agreement, again that we would take out and sign with individual operators. So in that area we do not have an umbrella agreement yet.

**Ms Poole:** If you take all three sectors together, the co-ops, the municipal non-profits, the provincial non-profits, the federal-provincial non-profits, how many would you estimate are right now without operating agreements?

**Mrs Herbert:** We have the numbers, we're just looking at them for recent—rather than read into the record numbers that I'm a little unsure of, because we've broken them out by program rather than by sector, we'll give you those numbers. We'll just revamp them and give them back to you.

**Ms Poole:** Would that be during today's hearing?

**Mrs Herbert:** We could probably see what we could do without a calculator.

**Ms Poole:** Even if we could have a rough estimate of what percentage are still not completed.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We have made real progress here, though. The co-op non-profit umbrella agreement

has been a task that the ministry has been working at off and on long before this government was elected to office, and it has been a matter of great relief not only to this minister but also to the staff in the ministry who've worked on this project to get it done. Patty can speak directly to that.

**Mrs Herbert:** We also anticipate that the work necessary to do the provincial unilaterals will be a lot shorter since we have been through the cooperative agreements. We expect to move fairly quickly.

**Ms Poole:** Do you have a target date by which operating agreements for all co-ops and non-profits, regardless of jurisdiction, will be in place?

**Mrs Herbert:** In the cooperative area our target was this summer to have all individual agreements signed. In the non-profit sector we've been targeting for the end of this year.

**Ms Poole:** And will you achieve your target for the co-op sector of having it completed this summer?

**Mrs Herbert:** Substantially, yes. The cooperative sector has been wonderful in terms of going out and training their own operators, so we've resolved many of the initial implementation issues. There may be one or two exceptions that for whatever reasons may feel they can't sign the agreement, and then we'll do individual negotiations.

**Ms Poole:** Going on to a bit of a different angle again—and, Minister, you might want to answer this or you may wish assistance from staff—one of the critical areas the auditor had was the audited financial statements, which were missing in a number of projects. Do all existing projects now have those audited financial statements and have they provided copies to the ministry?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Again, I would ask Sue to comment on that, or Dan, though I guess Sue has worked on it most immediately.

I could also point out—it might be of interest to you—that we have begun a process of reconciling all the accounts with the final cost figures so that we are ensuring that the subsidy flows are as they should be, given the terms under which the non-profit projects were developed. That has meant a lot of money flowing back and forth from the non-profits to the ministry and vice versa. However, the ministry has come out ahead on that, I think to the tune of \$9 million, was it, Dan?

**Mr Burns:** I think it was about \$5 million or \$6 million last year and our expectation this year is another \$7 million.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** So in the \$12-million range. That's net to the ministry, so that all those elements which go with the final cost accounts are getting worked on as we develop the total system of accounting.

**Mr Burns:** We had three backlogs raised in the



subject you were discussing, fully approved annual operating budgets, reviewed and agreed-to year-end financial statements, and final capital costs for construction projects. Each backlog had its own characteristics and reasons and, as I said at public accounts, we were in the middle of a cleanup program and we focused some staff on that and we've made tremendous progress on all three backlogs. One of them is almost completely extinguished; the other two have some remaining. Our goal is to comprehensively extinguish all three by Labour Day, and I think with some confidence that the backlog as it existed at public accounts will be in essence extinguished by Labour Day.

That's important, not just for the reconciliation objectives the minister alluded to and for a full current accounting of what's going on, but also for future discussions about a different kind of budget relationship. You've got to have a current, accepted level—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Status quo, yes.

**Mr Burns:** —agreed status quo on which to erect some reforms. So it's important for program reform reasons as well as good financial practices.

Do you want to add anything more about the specifics?

**Mrs Herbert:** No, I think we're on target. We're really pleased with the results.

**Ms Poole:** I'd like to go back to the minister's comments where she mentioned she wanted to loosen the controls, the day-to-day, minute-by-minute kind of controls for the sector. The question I have is: If you are planning to bring in a new way of looking at the day-to-day system and what controls are there—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Or not looking at it.

**Ms Poole:** You're not looking at it?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Or not looking at it. We have been looking at it.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, looking at it as something you want to implement, lightening up on the day-to-day controls.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, something we'd like to lighten up, right.

**Ms Poole:** Okay. Then I think spot audits are going to be very important to ensure that they're all carrying out what it says on the piece of paper. How often are spot audits of non-profit projects conducted right now, and for instance, could you give me a number of how many are conducted per year?

**Mr Burns:** A couple of things by way of backdrop before I give the specific answer to that. The budget relationship we're talking about—let's look at Peel Non-Profit Housing Corp as an example. They have between 50 and 60 operating projects under four or five different program formats. At the moment, we review line-by-line, item-by-item all 50 or 60 budgets, and if they want to move money from one line to another they have to

loop through our office. At the city of Toronto I know we used to spend time trying to convince the people to let us do a fence on one project and not on another. The established operators believe that there's a tremendous waste of time in preparing and administering a budget relationship at that level of detail.

What they prefer is to group the budgets at least by program if not by portfolio, still submit budgets, and operate on a bottom line at the end of the year. The financial statements we were talking about before are audited. So the first thing is that we require every operator to have an auditor prepare an assessment that goes with their financial statements when they submit it, so that we have audits at that level.

Secondly, from head office we initiate audits and we audit from a number of different points of view: one, if there's a problem identified; two, we audit through a grand cycle—local housing authorities, cooperatives and non-profits—and each year we audit a sample of organizations in addition to the audit that we require, programmatically, each organization to provide to us.

Now, how many audits per year we do: Our director of audit is here, Mr Singh. Perhaps you could advise us, beyond the audits we already get, how many audits we initiate and carry out in the cooperative and non-profit housing sector each year.

**The Chair:** Please, you've been introduced, and speak directly into the microphone.

1610

**Mr Brad Singh:** I don't have the exact facts, but I think it's about 20 we did last year. We did a joint audit with the federal CMHC people and we went on and visited a whole bunch of non-profits. In addition to that, there were the audits we do ourselves, and that's anywhere from 15 to 20. So you're looking at quite a huge number. And we do have, as the deputy said, a cycle that we go through. In fact, my people are actually out in the regions right now soliciting requests from the regional people as to what non-profits they want us to audit.

**The Chair:** A brief final question in this round, Ms Poole.

**Ms Poole:** How are those audits chosen? Do your regional people look for trouble spots? Do they do it randomly?

**Mr Singh:** From what I understand, they are chosen mainly from trouble spots. We don't actually choose them; it's the regions that tell us to audit them.

**Ms Poole:** But they are Ministry of Housing regional people who are doing it.

**Mr Singh:** Right. The random ones are the ones in which, when we go out with CMHC, let's say, the one I said just now, the audit we did last year, it's also done at random. We chose them ourselves.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Poole. Mrs Marland?

**Mrs Marland:** I need to know what's happened to the questions that I asked last week so that I know where you want me to start, where the minister wants me to start today.

**The Chair:** Well, the minister is prepared to respond to questions.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If I have a summary of the questions in the right order, Mrs Marland, you had asked for figures for a three-year growth.

**Mrs Marland:** That's one of the questions that I had asked.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Maybe what I'll do is go through my own notes here, and then go through some notes that were prepared by the ministry.

**Mrs Marland:** I did give your staff a complete copy of my opening questions and my supplementary questions, so your staff have had full cooperation from me.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Indeed they have, and that's much appreciated.

**The Chair:** And we're about to get the minister's full cooperation. So if she's prepared to respond—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We did have some discussion, and the figures for a three-year growth, we can provide. I think I indicated, in fact, that figures had been provided to the members of this committee. You think I can lay my hands on them now myself? No. I'd like to show you the sheet. No, that's not it. That was the Liberal questions. Here we are.

The sheet that says "Multiyear Expenditure Reductions" gives you an overview year by year, and I think there is a double sheet, in fact. Right: "Ministry of Housing Multiyear Expenditures." Did you receive this sheet, Mrs Marland? No, that's the rent one.

**Mrs Marland:** I'm sure I did.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That will give you the projections up to—

**Mrs Marland:** Excuse me. Could I have another copy of that from your staff? I left mine in the office. Please.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm sure we have an extra copy around here somewhere.

**The Chair:** The staff is preparing that for you, so please proceed.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It will give you expenditure projections up to the year 1996-97, which, as you will see when you consult the figures, will end out the current planned program expansion under the Jobs Ontario Homes project. So I think that will be helpful to you in response to that question.

You had raised some of the auditor's comments. As was indicated earlier by the deputy, our approach in the ministry has been to take every item that the auditor has raised as a serious item and to try and provide as well as we can a direct response to the comments he has

made and to the suggestions for improvement in our program design and our program operation. So when you suggested that we had disputed the auditor's comments, that was never the case. What we did do in some cases was point out some difficulties there had been in some of the methods that were used by the auditor to try and compare what had happened in the non-profit program with what had happened in the private sector. In some cases, we acknowledged and said to the auditor that those difficulties that were experienced in the auditor's report were as a result of the fact that we did not have a complete accounting of the final cost elements of projects. This stretches back over many years, this difficulty. It is exactly that point to which we were just addressing our remarks to Ms Poole in explaining how it was that we were providing a direct response to the auditor's comments and a change in our accounting so that we will have accounts by Labour Day for all the projects in Ontario.

You had talked about expanding shelter allowances and the shelter allowance alternative as a description of what was proposed in the Clayton report. I just wanted to comment very briefly that I don't think the Clayton report, if you read it, is proposing an alternative to shelter allowance; it is proposing an addition to the existing shelter allowance. If you look at the component of shelter allowances, which we—I don't know if we've handed this out, this rent supplement program.

**Interjection:** I can, though.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, please. We have information on the five rent supplement programs run by the ministry. If you look at them, it will also explain to you why some programs are much more expensive than others. Some are cost-shared with the federal government and the accounts only show the provincial payments into those programs. Some are dealing with older buildings and that also explains a difference in the cost.

But if we look at the whole field, rent supplement and shelter allowances, we can see that the cost certainly does not come anywhere near the \$114 per unit which is being proposed in the Clayton report. The shelter allowance alternative, in other words, is not really an alternative; it is an add-on. What it does is say that if we bring another several hundred thousand households into assistance for housing, this is how we could do it, at \$114 a unit. It doesn't guarantee, for example, that there will be a bachelor unit available for \$450 in York. So it's not an alternative.

You also commented that there was subsidization of land and construction in the non-profit program. I just want to go back over this for a moment, because the non-profit program, from the government's point of view, is a financing program and a design program. It's also an accountability program. It's not a building program and it's not a management program. Government neither builds nor operates non-profit housing. It



provides financing and it provides a program framework under which non-profit housing is developed and managed.

There is no subsidization involved. What we do subsidize is the difference between the cost to a tenant household in a rent-geared-to-income unit of non-profit housing—the difference between what that tenant household can pay at 25%—it will be 26%—of household income and the real cost of the unit over 35 years. We continue to pay rent-geared-to-income assistance to those households. We pay them at a higher level than \$114 a month, as we pay at a higher level than \$114 a month in the shelter allowance component of social assistance and in the rent subsidy programs the ministry directly administers.

**1620**

There is no subsidization in the non-profit program of land or construction because the program is financed over a 35-year period and it pays for itself over a 35-year period. It does not pay the rent-geared-to-income portion, but that portion will have to be paid in any case.

We have to provide assistance to people around housing. We do it through shelter allowances in the social assistance system, we do it through rent subsidies in the Ministry of Housing program and we do it through rent-geared-to-income assistance in non-profit housing and in public housing.

You had asked for direct information on the number of people who were on social assistance and accommodated in non-profit and public housing. We have those figures for you. When I looked at them, it seemed to me that we were dealing with about 10% of the total number of public housing and non-profit housing units. Do we have copies of that for—

**Interjection:** No, we don't. We can get them.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We'll be glad to provide you with that. We have the materials available.

Another question you had raised related to whether people who were refugee claimants, because of the point rating system in the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority—in fact, the same point rating system is used in all the local housing authorities in the province—had a better opportunity to enter local housing authority housing than other applicants.

The indications we have are that this is not the case. At one point where there was a survey in June-July 1991, the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority showed that 21% of all its applicants were refugee claimants. However, among those refugee claimants, they did not have much difference in the points at which they were rated than other applicants. They were 21% of all applicants, and of applicants with more than 130 points, those refugee claimants constituted 28%. That would more or less indicate their status as a group

within the overall applicant group.

**The Chair:** What was that number again, Minister? I'm sorry, I missed the first number.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** In June-July 1991, refugee claimants constituted 21% of all applicants. They constituted 28% of applicants with more than 130 points on the rating system.

In many other parts of the province the percentage of refugee claimants among housing applicants is small. I think Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton would be the areas in which we would see the highest number of refugee claimants making application, with Toronto definitely in the lead. That gives you some indication of their status here in Toronto.

I have some detailed notes on the Coxwell Avenue development which Mrs Marland had given information about.

**Mrs Marland:** Is that the bachelor one, Coxwell Avenue?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, it is. It's for single people. It is a small development. It is a development with very high costs mainly because of the people it serves, who are among the most difficult to serve. It is also a 100% rent-geared-to-income project. I believe there are 12 units in the project. I don't have a copy of that information right before me, but I'd be glad to provide extra information to you on that.

You had questioned the pressure that market units in assisted housing constitute as competition to private market landlords who may have vacant units. I should point out, first of all, that most of the vacant units that we see in the private market are at the high end of the rental scale, so that while there are vacant units in non-profit developments, many of them would be in the medium range of price and not constitute direct competition because of that. We did have some extended discussion around this point last week too.

The other point I would like to make is that if we took all the market units that exist within non-profit housing developments and compared that number to the number of private rental units that are available in the market, it is about 2% of the total rental units available in the market, so it's not what you'd consider an overwhelming kind of pressure as a competitive element in the rental market.

We had some discussion which somehow led me to write down notes about Saskatchewan and BC. I can't recollect why I did that. There was some discussion of on-reserve housing—

**Mrs Marland:** Decontrol; it wasn't on-reserve, it was decontrol.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Okay, so we have provided some response to that.

**Mr Burns:** We have provided a bibliography of



material related to the issue of decontrol.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Very good.

**Mrs Marland:** Madam Minister, I appreciate the bibliography, which possibly I could have got from the library. If I need any of these, Mr Burns, do you have copies of these and I could request them through your office?

**Mr Burns:** We have copies of most of them. A great many of them are in our library.

**The Chair:** If I might suggest as the Chair, we have a researcher who is assigned to this committee. They are available at any time. If you wish to have all of those items corralled and you'd like to make that request—

**Mrs Marland:** From the ministry?

**The Chair:** No, we have a researcher who will go and obtain information for you. But as you indicated, if it is in the library, either your staff can get it or we have research staff. I'm sure we're not asking the Ministry of Housing to assemble all of these.

**Mrs Marland:** No, Mr Chair, my question was, if there is one of these reports that we would like that isn't available other than through the ministry, may we get a copy from the ministry?

**Mr Burns:** Anything you can't get from the legislative services operations that we may have, you can certainly have access to it one way or another and read it, borrow it, copy it, whatever makes sense at the end of the day.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, I don't know if Ms Marland was here when I said earlier that we had some materials that would be available this afternoon which we think are particularly pertinent to the kinds of issues which members have been raising, and that the items, the reports or studies which are starred on the bibliography, are ones which have undergone review at the ministry so that ministry comments would be available on them if that were of interest to you.

**Mrs Marland:** I appreciate that, and receiving these copies. That is very helpful to know that if we need it, we can come back to you for anything else.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** Could I just ask, Mr Burns, is this an absolutely complete bibliography? Is there any research material which has been done for your ministry which is not listed here?

**The Chair:** On that subject?

**Mr Turnbull:** On this subject.

**Mr Burns:** I will say at this moment that I don't believe we've commissioned any work, at any point in the last number of years, that is not included there.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** On this subject.

**Mr Turnbull:** Are you including the time that the Liberals were in power?

**Mr Burns:** By "last number of years," yes. You'll

see that material on those bibliographies runs back about 10 years and includes material commissioned by the federal government as well as the government of Ontario. But I'm going to have one small proviso; that is, I'm going to ask our policy and research staff to confirm that my answer is accurate.

**Mr Turnbull:** I would appreciate that, yes.

**Mr Burns:** If there's anything more to add, I will be in communication.

1630

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair, I believe that may be the highlights of the questions that were raised by Ms Marland. There was another question that had to do with the advertising campaign for rent control. The original budget for that, and I think we discussed this in last year's estimates, was \$1,796,310. I believe she had asked also what the television costs involved with that were. From the last year's estimate of costs, the production costs for television would have been \$115,500 and the on-air costs would have been \$540,615. The actuals were somewhat different. The production costs for television were \$117,460 and the on-air costs—am I going too fast?—\$537,275. I should point out that the actual cost of the total campaign amounted to \$1,493,637, so it was \$300,000 less than originally budgeted.

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you for that answer, Madam Minister. There are a number of questions that haven't been answered. We have this confusion about numbers between the households that receive the shelter allowance, relating to a letter I had from Mr Burns, and also this ongoing question about whether some social assistance recipients receive both Comsoc shelter allowance and the housing subsidy.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** In fact, as I indicated, Ms Marland, we do have a sheet that will give you that information.

**Mrs Marland:** Is that what's coming? It's hard for me to know what's coming when I haven't seen—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That is precisely addressed in the sheet we're providing.

**The Chair:** That has been circulated.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. Another question I asked was how many units are under management versus the number still under development. I also asked for a breakdown by mortgage since April 1992.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes. Those figures we are working on. As I indicated in the last day of discussion, we've been told by our staff that that is compilable in a relatively easy fashion, and we'll get them to Ms Marland and other committee members as quickly as possible.

**Mrs Marland:** Great. Thank you. I also asked about why the Ontario Housing Corp was given its 5% across-the-board payroll increases.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Ah, yes. I'd be pleased to address that. I think the confusion arose, and it arose all around the House, as far as I was concerned, at about the time at which this decision was made. The time at which the decision was made in terms of salary increases for Ontario Housing Corp staff was before the government had announced it was going to do government-wide expenditure controls, to which your leader had referred, and because of the confusion in the House, I think that probably wasn't understood at the time.

What the pattern has been—in fact, there is an agreement. The memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Housing and the Ontario Housing Corp says that OHC staff will be provided the same employment standards, classification, salary ranges and employee benefits as those established by the Civil Service Commission. So the cost-of-living increase for 1993 which was being mentioned in those minutes and in that decision by the OHC board was the cost-of-living increase that was at that time planned for the Ontario public service.

I've made it clear publicly since then that the OHC is involved in the same expenditure programs, and in fact in the social contract, as the Ontario public service in general, because the memorandum of understanding makes it quite clear that whatever applies to the Ontario public service and is administered by the Civil Service Commission applies to the Ontario Housing Corp. That included the merit pay opportunity which was provided in what was understood to be the forecast for the 1993-94 year at that point, at the point the directors of the Ontario Housing Corp—

**Mrs Marland:** I did say it was merit pay as well.

The other question I asked you was about this question of whether landlords should be able to get the information about the income of prospective tenants. What I asked you was that, given the essential role of income testing in social housing programs, do you think it's reasonable for any property owner not to be able to use income testing to determine affordability of housing?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** This is a very difficult question, or it wouldn't be before the Human Rights Commission. The commission has determined that it's an issue and sent it to an inquiry. I will certainly be interested to see the results of that inquiry. It does pose a dilemma for non-profit housing.

**Mrs Marland:** They've ruled on it, though, didn't they?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** There is a board of inquiry which has been established to determine whether this will become an operative regulation within Ontario. It does pose a dilemma for landlords; I don't think there's any doubt about that. It poses a particular dilemma for non-profit housing landlords, because we have set out a

program in which we expect non-profit housing landlords to provide for a community which has mixed income; hence the dilemma. Do you have any suggestions?

**Mrs Marland:** If I were the Minister of Housing, I would have.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'll listen to your suggestions anyhow.

**Mrs Marland:** Madam Minister, do you think it's reasonable not to establish the incomes? How could the program work without establishing them?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Let me pose you a dilemma. You're a social housing provider, you're a co-op in Peel, a household comes to you and indicates by way of references that, in spite of the fact that that household has been spending 50% of its income on rent in the private market, up to this point in time it has been on time with its rent payments and it has paid all its rent payments. As Minister of Housing, you might say: "I'm not going to have a mixed-income community here if I allow people who have to spend 50% of their income on a market rent unit in this development into a market rent unit. It won't be mixed income. It will be mixed rent, but it won't be mixed income." How do we solve that? That's a very good question. I don't have an easy answer for it. I would be interested in your opinion.

**Mrs Marland:** Minister, I think the bottom line is that if people who are working in this province are subsidizing people who need help, and there's no question that all of us agree that people who need help have to prove their eligibility for that help, I don't mind any government having a policy where we help the people who need it, but they can't hide behind false figures or information as to their eligibility. If I'm going to ask for somebody who's working to subsidize my situation at any given time, I've got to be willing to meet the requirements of whatever word you want to use, a means test to prove—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Mr Chair—

**Mrs Marland:** Well, you asked me. I'm telling you what I think.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, because I don't think I asked the question clearly. Please forgive me.

1640

**Mrs Marland:** Well, let me just answer in terms of the basic question of income testing. I think two things. If a private landlord owns property and he or she has made an investment in that property, they're entitled to know who they're leasing their property to. Secondly, if the property is owned and operated by the government, although—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It's not operated by the government. It's operated within a government policy framework.

**Mrs Marland:** I know. In fact, I found it amazing



that you said—I wrote it down—“The government doesn’t build or subsidize housing programs.” I thought, boy, I wish we had an hour to get into that, but we don’t.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Well, we subsidize rent-geared-to-income.

**The Chair:** Both of you have 30 seconds left.

**Mrs Marland:** I would finish by saying that you can’t expect the people in this room who are working and paying income tax which goes to government, which provides government with an ability to provide programs, to do that for other people who may be earning the same as they are, but without income testing or establishing what it is they’re earning in an accurate format—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** This is not a question of eligibility that we’re dealing with. I raised the question in the wrong way if you’ve understood it that way. What I’m saying to you is, if working people who earn a very low income come to you as the administrator of a non-profit housing program in Peel and say, “I would like to rent a market unit, no subsidy involved here, at the market rent, but it’s going to take 50% of my household income,” and you say, “No, I want you to have a high enough income to meet the mixed-income target of this development so that you don’t have to pay 50% of your income; you can get by paying on the market rent that will only take 30% of your household income”—

**Mrs Marland:** But Madam Minister, for you to know those figures—

**The Chair:** Mrs Marland, I really appreciate—

**Mrs Marland:** Just 10 seconds.

**The Chair:** No. I am told we may be called to the House for a vote by 5 o’clock, and I am going to recognize Mr Lessard. There will be a further rotation for both you and the minister.

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** Madam Minister, I received a letter from the Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association last week with respect to Bill 112, the Building Code Act. They say in their letter—and this was a letter that had been sent to the Premier—that they were desirous that only persons who are adequately knowledgeable in the field of plumbing should perform the duties of a plumbing inspector.

At one of their meetings, they had passed a resolution, and the resolution states that they feel that councils of each municipality with a population of 50,000 and greater should appoint a chief senior plumbing inspector who possesses the qualifications of a plumber as defined in regulation 52, made under the Apprenticeship and Tradesmen’s Qualification Act, and such inspectors as are necessary for the purposes of enforcement of this act in which the municipality has jurisdiction.

They really want only plumbers to be able to do

plumbing inspections. I know that Bill 112 was passed last year. I just wondered whether the concerns of the plumbing inspectors association were taken into consideration at the time and whether there’s a response to the letter I received from the plumbing inspectors association about this issue.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If the plumbing inspectors association has written the ministry, it will receive a response. To tell you the truth, I have no idea what it will be. I do know that as we’ve developed changes to the building code and as we’ve attempted to make sure that the building code is properly implemented around Ontario, we certainly have had contact on a regular basis with the professional organizations involved. Perhaps Dan would be better placed to—let’s put it frankly: He knows more about this stuff than I do.

**Mr Burns:** Mr Chair, the Building Code Act puts the onus on the chief building official of a municipality to ensure that permits are issued in accordance with the code and that inspections take place during the construction period up to the issuance of an occupancy permit. There exists within the professional associations in this field, within the community colleges and within the ministry, an ongoing program of training for all of the issues that arise in the construction process, not just plumbing.

The largest municipalities, in my experience, do maintain on their staff a variety of particular technical skills, including fully trained professional engineers and, in the normal course of events, people with qualifications in a number of the construction trades, including plumbing. As you get to smaller and smaller jurisdictions, they have fewer and fewer staff and it’s more common to find people who have some exposure across a spectrum of the issues, some level of training.

We have not required, to my knowledge, municipalities to maintain on their staff, by size of municipality or by any other indicator—volume of building permits, for example—a particular set of professional skills. So some small municipalities, for example, which have only a general inspector and where the chief building official may also be the head of the planning operation or the chief engineer, if they get a large, complex project, tend to hire someone else to help them assess the application to ensure it’s professionally done. The reason for that is, by and large, their liability insurance. They have to protect the council and the chief building official against suits.

Having said that, if any professional association, whether that’s engineers or anyone from the construction trades, believes it has a valid argument to put forward that some part of the construction process should only be assessed by people with particular professional training, we will take that proposition seriously and look at it seriously and have a discussion with the organization.



**Mr Lessard:** I have another question in another area. A couple of weeks ago, I was approached by two groups in the city of Windsor, both of which I know very well and know and respect the work they do in the community. One of them is the Accessible Housing Service and the other one is Community Labour Support Services, which are both interested in making application to a government program that provides funding for providing affordable housing services in the community. They were both interested in my support.

I suppose it would be great if they could put together a joint proposal to access this government funding, but it doesn't seem as though they're able to do that. However, it does seem that the government's current initiatives are such that both of these groups aren't going to be able to continue to provide services separate and apart from one another.

I wonder whether the minister could give me some idea of what it is we're trying to achieve in this area, because I know I've lobbied in the past for extended funding for the Accessible Housing Service and it's been one year. It seems as though the time is up. I mean, there has to be a time when the extensions are going to end and we have to decide what it is we're doing and what services we want provided in the community and who's going to provide them.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'll try to be very brief. The issue you raise is a very important one. There are groups around this province which are providing a very important service to the people who live in their communities when it comes to housing problems, to put it most generally. That includes active tenant groups. It includes groups, for example, which specialize in legal services around housing issues, such as CERA. It concludes groups such as the access to permanent housing projects.

1650

In the Ministry of Housing we had suggested that we take over the responsibility for the access to permanent housing committees and projects from Community and Social Services in the last fiscal year. We did that. We picked up one half of the costs in 1992-93. There are 11 projects, which are known in our ministry vernacular as small programs, which added up to something over \$11 million in fiscal 1992-93, for which we have had to look for reductions in programs and reductions in funding.

Some of them we've just eliminated. They were small programs, they were not vital programs and we've got away from them. Some of them will go next year including, for example, assistance to municipalities to help them comply with the requirements under the housing policy statement. There, the funding has been multi-year funding, and those agreements will run out at the end of this fiscal year. So some of them don't pose a long-term drain on the moneys that are available but,

overall, we have about \$7 million to spend on these programs which provide assistance to people who are having difficulty around housing within their communities.

What we have done is amalgamated the access to permanent housing efforts with the home-sharing efforts with the partners-in-housing efforts that are going on around the province and asked that within each community those projects try and get together and decide their priorities, see if there are ways that they can within what is in most cases a reduced allocation.

We've tried to distribute the amounts in a fair way around the province compared to, for example, the number of tenants in the province who will be in need of assistance from tenants' groups. We've tried to make a regional allocation which is fair and we've asked the groups to try and work together to come up with proposals for how they will proceed. We're proposing that this not be a year-to-year kind of funding arrangement as the access to permanent housing projects had been, but that it be longer-range core funding.

We know that in some communities groups have been able to come together and make joint proposals and in other communities that hasn't been possible. Some communities have received a higher level of funding on a per tenant and on a social assistance basis than other communities. We've tried to even out what we thought would be reasonable allocations on that basis.

The deadline for the applications that we've asked for is the end of the month, and we'll see when those applications come in how successful groups have been at the local level in bringing together their proposals.

I'm hopeful that it's going to work out without cutbacks in important services at the community level, and personally I regard this as one of the more important program areas that the ministry's involved in. It is, however, an operating expense in a time when we have had to try and reduce our operating expenses.

**Ms Margaret H. Harrington (Niagara Falls):** I think I'd like to give my time to my colleague Mr Wiseman.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** I'd like to put a motion on the floor at this time that would require all estimates hearings for the Ministry of Health to be done in committee room 2.

**The Chair:** Your motion's out of order. Please proceed with a question.

**Mr Wiseman:** Could I have an explanation as to why it is out of order, Mr Chair?

**The Chair:** Because it's a procedural matter, and we're not interrupting the business of the Ministry of Housing estimates, which is my responsibility as the Chair. When we finish our votes today, at day's end, you can raise it as a point of new business, and it would be very helpful at that time, but I'm not going to

interrupt the Ministry of Housing estimates. That's my ruling.

**Ms Harrington:** I had three questions that I wanted to put on the record. Certainly these are matters that have been raised to me from Niagara region and publicly as well that are of concern.

The first one is what Mr Lessard was concerned about, whether or not there would be permanent funding for access to permanent housing and home sharing. You did indicate that you were going to a permanent type of funding.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We won't be looking for a submission year after year. That's right.

**Ms Harrington:** Okay.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Nothing is ever permanent.

**Ms Harrington:** Okay. I'll turn to the other questions which I also think are important to the future and the direction of non-profit housing. I think it's important that all of us here try to get the message across the province as to the direction.

The first question is the proportion of subsidy units in non-profit housing. I understand that over the past few years that proportion has changed—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Ms Harrington:** —that it has increased the subsidy levels. What I wanted to know is your vision of an acceptable range over the next few years ahead and what we're heading into.

The second question I'd like to put on the record is the distribution of non-profit housing across the province. There have been different studies carried out as to what parts of the province should get a greater or lesser share of the allocation at a provincial level.

My suggestion, and I made this at the public accounts committee, was that there should be a closer working relationship with the municipalities or the regions as to how these allocations would be made. But I need to have from you the process that is used now as to where non-profit housing goes and what your vision for the future would be as to how we would locate these units.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Ms Harrington is quite correct in saying that the programs of non-profit housing have changed over the years inasmuch as originally federally/provincially financed non-profit housing had targeted 25% rent-geared-to-income levels within non-profit housing developments. We've come over the years to change that ratio in various programs. Overall, the level is now probably between 70% and 75%. Close to 75% of all non-profit units are rent-geared-to-income.

We haven't set a defined level. It is up to the groups that are proposing developments to make us an offer, as it were, and because there's lot of competition in that offering process. For example, in the December proposal call we saw about six times as many proposals come

in as there was financing within that proposal call. We expect the same to continue with the rest of Jobs Ontario Homes.

There are some developments which are done on 100% rent geared to income. One I had mentioned earlier was on Coxwell Avenue and had been specifically raised by Ms Marland. It's one which has experienced high costs and some difficulties, because it was designed to serve people who are hard to house, as the phrase goes, people with specific difficulties in maintaining permanent accommodation.

There is a kind of consensus that has developed in Ontario that it is wise to have mixed income within non-profit developments. I know there are projects which run at close to 100% or 100% RGI and work very well. I think it depends on the time, the place, the sponsor, the people who are going to be housed. It depends on a lot of variables, but I think that, overall, we'd expect that developments would continue at about the 75%, maybe 80% rent-geared-to-income level in terms of the proposals that are coming in.

Distribution is an interesting question too. Dan is the world's expert on distribution of housing, so I should let him speak to it.

**The Chair:** Please proceed, Deputy.

**Mr Burns:** Since 1986, when by agreement the provinces took over the delivery of non-profit cooperative housing from the federal government, we have as a group of provinces worked with the federal government on a model that was intended to give a measure of housing need within a province, and when a province was large enough, within regions within a province. I think in our case, we've got 14 or 17, a number in that order of magnitude.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Too many.

**Mr Burns:** Yes, too many. The specific measure has the unfortunate acronym of CNITS.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, I apologize for interrupting. We are being called to a vote in the House. I would ask members to return as quickly as possible, because it is our hope to finish our estimates today. This committee stands recessed until the vote is completed, at which time we'll return.

*The Committee recessed from 1701 to 1716.*

**The Chair:** I'd like to call to order and resume our estimates of the Ministry of Housing. I am advised that we may be called to the House at around a quarter to or 10 to, and I require at least four minutes to complete our votes since we've agreed to stack our votes. If that is agreeable, I'll move immediately to Mrs Poole for about 15 minutes of her estimates.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I have an answer for Ms Poole that I could give quickly. She had asked, in the last two years how many of the units which had been allocated were allocated to co-ops. I'll do it by program: the



federal-provincial in 1992, 546 units out of 3,062 or 18%; in P-10,000, 4,056 units out of 9,918 or 41%; in the jobs ready component of Homes Now—what's the jobs ready?

That's the December call for Jobs Ontario Homes which is not called—yes, it's called jobs ready—strike me dead—385 units—

**Mr Turnbull:** Tempting.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, God only does that—out of 2,196 or 17.5%; and in the federal-provincial 1993 allocation, the initial selection—it's not finished yet—664 units out of 2,188 or 30%. The target for Jobs Ontario Homes overall for the co-op sector is 35% to 40%.

**Ms Poole:** But the jobs ready is not part of—it is?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It is part of Jobs Ontario Homes.

**Ms Poole:** It's not Homes Now?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** It was the initial call that we did in December. That's correct.

**Ms Poole:** I'm sorry. I thought you said jobs ready from Homes Now.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I did. I screwed it up. Forgive me.

**Ms Poole:** On that I think I can forgive you.

I'd like to ask a number of fairly brief questions and I'm hoping the minister could just give a brief answer in view of the fact that we're now running out of time.

On the eligibility process, people are really asking a lot of questions on who determines this. Let's say there's a family in need of an affordable housing unit and they're interested in non-profit housing. I'm not talking about an MTHA or an OHC or co-op; I'm talking about something probably run by a charity, a church, whatever. Who reviews their application to the building and determines the type of subsidy they're entitled to? This is their initial application. Who deems that they are eligible for subsidy?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Sue Herbert may want to come up and correct me when I fall wrong. I'll try and do it very briefly. They make application either to the local housing authority or to the specific non-profit. The non-profit will have a target which it has agreed to achieve in its initial allocation plan with the ministry. That will include a certain number of RGI units. The household will be eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance to pay the rent in the unit at a level, currently, of 25%; it will become 26% in the next few months for the 1993-94 period, and it will rise further each year by 1%, up to the level of 30% of household income over the next five years.

Who determines which people are selected? When rent-up is going on, non-profits have an agreement that they take names from the local housing authority, and in almost all cases there's been no problem with that.

However, as time goes by, non-profits have not held to the original understanding in many cases. This was noted by the Provincial Auditor. They take names from the local housing authority list, which has led to some of the points that he raised in his report, which are that there's not a really accurate way of determining who's on whose list and, second, to make sure that people are being addressed in some sense of priority. There is always the question of whether some non-profits are screening so that they are choosing people who are easiest to serve, rather than hardest to serve, as clients.

To address this question, which was widely discussed publicly in the housing policy framework consultation around the province, we came up with a proposed policy in Consultation Counts, our policy response to that consultation, in which we said we would try to develop a one-window approach. That process, the development of a one-window approach, is going on right now. There is consultation going on with housing providers across the province on how best to achieve that.

**Ms Poole:** That leads into a whole series of questions I had. I'm specifically interested in situations where the non-profit decides that somebody is eligible to come into their building without taking them from a municipal or a housing authority list, the ones that the auditor had targeted in his report.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** He said there was no assurance in this system.

**Ms Poole:** That's right.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** He's quite correct. That had been noted in the housing policy framework discussion which we initiated around this province before he wrote his report.

**Ms Poole:** I think I would say to you that the auditor was out there compiling his report at the same time you were doing your housing framework.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Well, we didn't wait for him. Let's put it that way.

**Ms Poole:** The concern I have is the ministry involvement in this process and whether in fact the ministry is doing either a look at every single application or, at the very minimum, if it is doing any type of spot check to ensure that these are meeting the requirements of the eligibility, whether it be a shallow or a deep subsidy or—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** There's no question about that. The question is, who gets priority—

**Ms Poole:** And who's being placed.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** —among the many people who are eligible?

**Ms Poole:** That's right.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** That's the problem he was addressing. He raised no question about whether there



were people who were getting rent-geared-to-income assistance and who were ineligible for that. He did not question that. He found no evidence of that.

**Ms Poole:** What I'm saying to you, Madam Minister, is if we don't have a process in place where it's assured, then it does lead to concern by people, whether in fact—

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes, that's right. Sue, I think, could help.

**The Chair:** Do you seek further clarification on this, Ms Poole?

**Ms Poole:** Yes. It could be brief because I do have—

**Mr Burns:** One sentence, Mr Chairman: When we audit, we audit for compliance in this respect: that the housing provider is properly taking a submission on household income and verifying it, and if verification is required annually, as part of the subsidy arrangement, that that's being done.

**Mrs Herbert:** The only thing I would add is that as part of our regular administrative review, we also look at the compliance with the existing agreement with the local housing authority. It is part of a cycle of administrative reviews that our administrators do once a program is printed up. But as the minister has already said, we have known for some time that we have some problems with compliance.

**Mr Burns:** That has to do with the referral process.

**Mrs Herbert:** Yes, with the referral process.

**Mr Burns:** But whether other than referrals they are adhering to the practices we require, that's obviously part of our contractual arrangement, but it's also part of an annual audit we do. People know they may be audited on that.

**Ms Poole:** What progress, if any, has been made towards providing a central waiting list, where individuals needing affordable housing are listed as such only once?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Here again, I'll ask Sue to comment specifically on the measures we're undertaking, because we're not essentially aiming for a central waiting list.

**Mrs Herbert:** In the consultation process, what we've asked communities to look at is what steps will make sense for their community to ensure adequate access from a consumer's point of view that will be easy and simple and will work in their community. So we're not prescribing one model across the province. Some communities have already established processes to ensure one-window access. I think Hamilton might be one example of that. Other communities are going to look at some shared resources.

We have prescribed certain minimums around ensuring that people who require housing know where to get

it and how to get on lists, everything from what I might describe as simple, similar formats for applications so that applications are clearly understood, publishing directories and registries so that people who are applying know where to go, what the different types of housing are, right through to a central registry. But we're asking communities how that would work, and how that would work in their particular community.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** And no application fee.

**Mrs Herbert:** And no application fee. There's a whole number of processes we're looking at right now. We can share with you the document that actually is out formally for consultation. We could have that for you.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, I'd appreciate that. The bottom line is, are you going to have a central registry? Notwithstanding that each community may access those names in different ways, are you going to have one central registry for the entire province so you know exactly how many people?

**Mrs Herbert:** No.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, but we will be able to determine how many people are on waiting lists within a region in an accurate way, as opposed to what exists right now. This is a very tricky and difficult area, as you can well imagine. I think there's suspicion on the side of local housing authorities that non-profits are housing people who are easier to house than local housing authorities are providing housing for, and on the other hand, non-profits feel that the names that are suggested by local housing authorities are the most difficult to house. We have to overcome some of that mutual unease at the community level and work towards some more cooperative and stable kind of way of addressing applications.

**Ms Poole:** Because I don't have time to go into numerous other questions that I haven't had a chance to address, we will be providing to the minister this week a list of written questions covering the areas of rent control, rental housing, rehabilitation, public housing, co-ops, basement apartments, home ownership, the Condominium Act, further questions about the status of Seaton, housing priority versus sale of assets, the Sewell commission, building code amendments and on the role of the private sector in rental housing in Ontario.

1730

I just have one request that I would formally make: Last year in Housing estimates, in August, we had tabled a list of written questions with the ministry and we did not get our response until March. I am formally requesting that our Housing critic, Joe Cordiano, be provided with an answer the first day after Labour Day, and if there are questions that the ministry is not able to answer in that time, if it would give our Housing critic a new estimated time when those data will be available.

**The Chair:** I should like to clarify very quickly that

it has been the custom to treat these kinds of requests in a form similar to an order paper question, and that staff be given sufficient time to prepare responses—that undertaking is usually always forthcoming—and secondly, that they be circulated to the clerk of the committee, because they are requests through the committee and therefore are available to all members of the committee who so choose them, so that without interrupting your request, the Chair would direct it through the clerk, and it'll be the clerk's responsibility. In that way, it avoids all the unnecessary telephoning and dialogue, because it was an official request through the estimates committee.

Do you have a final statement in your remaining 30 seconds?

**Ms Poole:** Yes. Just that the reason I specifically mentioned our Housing critic is that I have been substituting for him the past week in his absence.

**The Chair:** The clerk has so noted that, and it will be done accordingly.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you.

**Mr Turnbull:** Minister, earlier this year, actually in January, I brought to your attention a difficult situation at 1002 Lawrence Avenue East.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Yes.

**Mr Turnbull:** Just to refresh your memory, this is the difficult situation where a rather unscrupulous landlord had bought a building and was attempting, through the back door, to convert it into some form of share ownership in the building, and was trying to squeeze tenants out of the building and tried all kinds of tactics. The lighting was off periodically. Heating was off.

My question to you is, in light of the fact that we had just a little while ago the City of London Act (Vital Services), 1993, a Pr bill, would you consider bringing such legislation forward so that municipalities don't have to ask for this on a piecemeal basis?

I'm particularly concerned in this case. I did an inspection of the building again the other day and there was a notice in the building that Consumers' Gas is actually going to turn off the service tomorrow, which would lead to no hot water for the tenants.

Also, I am concerned at the fact that we have, obviously, the Planning Act and the municipal property standards act which tenants can rely on, but the length of time in order to get any action on this is sometimes untenable. The furnace was essentially inoperative towards the end of last winter, and now we have the opportunity to replace the furnace and nothing has been done. That's a long-winded question but it is just to give the background.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** To answer very simply, Mr Turnbull, this issue has arisen before, and not just with respect to this building. Some municipalities, as you're aware—London most recently—have sought private

bills in order to have the authority to have accounts made up for private utilities into which tenants could pay in situations like this. I have formally addressed to my colleague Ed Philip a letter in which I draw to his attention the possibility of our considering a change which would permit it in all municipalities across Ontario. There have been difficulties around this in the past, so we'll go through a new round of discussion on it. But it's certainly a matter in which I'm very interested.

I should also say that both rent control officials and officials from the rental housing protection office of the ministry have been actively engaged with assisting tenants in that building to become familiar with the assistance they can have through the Rent Control Act and through the Rental Housing Protection Act in the situation they find themselves in.

**Mr Turnbull:** My constituents have told me that they have woken up at 4 o'clock in the morning and work has been proceeding in other units that they've managed to get vacancies in. This is absolutely intolerable.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Under the Rent Control Act, this might be construed as a question of harassment. Certainly, they are entitled to quiet enjoyment under the Landlord and Tenant Act, and rent control officials are doing their utmost to try and make sure that tenants are aware of all aspects of the existing legislation which can be of assistance to them in this situation.

**Mr Turnbull:** As to your construing that as a question of quiet enjoyment, I'm not a lawyer, but I think that isn't the correct interpretation of what "quiet enjoyment" means, having those sorts of disturbances in the night.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** In fact, we don't administer the Landlord and Tenant Act. That comes under the Ministry of the Attorney General. We do answer a lot of calls at our rent control offices about the Landlord and Tenant Act because many issues that tenants want to raise concern the Landlord and Tenant Act. I can see a volunteer in the group.

**The Chair:** Mr Glass has returned to the table, Mr Turnbull, and he's been listening intently.

**Mr Robert Glass:** The difficulty around this type of property, and we have had a number of incidents reported to us, is that essentially what the owners are doing is that there's a change of ownership and they're selling shares; the number of shareholders happens to match the exact number of apartments. Our difficulty in this is that we have not been able at this point to prove that someone has been promised an apartment for buying a share in this new operation. There is an investigation.

**Mr Turnbull:** I appreciate your difficulty in being able to prove that and I understand how the legislation



works, but it's the tactics that are being used to force people out of their units, which is absolutely reprehensible. The poor tenants have paid money into a trust fund and have engaged a lawyer, but in the meantime they're being harassed constantly by little things. Well, it isn't a little thing having the gas turned off or having the heat off for the day, but by the time inspectors get there the situation has usually been remedied. We need to be able to fix these sort of situations on a much more timely basis.

**Mr Glass:** The tenants could proceed in two directions: under the Landlord and Tenant Act, of course, and they're working with Flemingdon Legal Services around the "quiet enjoyment" provisions or around harassment provisions by the landlord if that's what's being determined; the other way they can proceed, if there are maintenance problems or a reduction in services, is under the Rent Control Act. We've been working with the city of North York to see if we have situations we can deal with under those provisions.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** If I could just add to that, the Rent Control Act makes it illegal for a landlord to harass tenants who are in the process of trying to form or operate an association.

**Mr Turnbull:** I don't think that was the situation.

If we could turn to another question, in my colleague Mrs Marland's opening statements, she discussed a non-profit group which paid \$2.85 million for less than two acres of land. I believe this was the Woodgreen Community Centre. Within a matter of a couple of weeks, the sponsoring group made a profit of \$2.3 million by selling this to themselves, in essence. The highest price per acre that had ever been recorded in the neighbourhood was \$300,000 and they were paying close to \$1.4 million per acre for land. Can I ask you whether you have moved to prosecute people for this action?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** The answer is no. We can certainly provide you with information about the project in question.

**Mr Turnbull:** This is clearly a flip, minister; you remember that famous term, a "flip." This is a flip, and this was perpetrated by the people who were the sponsors of this so-called non-profit housing.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** Would you like to comment, Dan?

**Mr Burns:** I think the land transaction that was discussed in the auditor's report, and which we discussed in public accounts for a period of time, was not a transaction that involved Woodgreen Community Housing. The land transactions of Woodgreen Community Housing were raised at public accounts, but in the context of the Woodgreen Community Centre Foundation providing in effect a write-down of some of the land costs it had incurred towards its project, and had we assessed that and what was our perspective on that?

**Mr Turnbull:** But do I understand correctly that they had bought it a matter of two weeks before they conveyed it to this non-profit housing association?

**Mr Burns:** I have not recently examined the files of Woodgreen. It's certainly possible that the community centre bought the land and transferred it to the housing company, which is associated with the community centre. What we did say at the public accounts committee, and which we have said in response to a number of inquiries about this, is that the development proposal they put forward to the ministry was assessed in the same way any other one would be and conformed with our guidelines and was subjected to the same sorts of tests and appraisals and the rest of it that anybody else would be.

1740

**Mr Turnbull:** Since you don't seem to be totally familiar with it, let us say hypothetically that this is correct.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** No, we can't be hypothetical about this.

**Mr Turnbull:** Well, then, let me ask you, since you don't seem to have the information, can you undertake to let me know what actions you're going to take if in fact this land was flipped for this kind of profit? This is a flip; this is exactly what people talk about.

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** You're categorizing it as a flip. I think it's a bit more complex than that. Is it possible that we have some information here that is available immediately?

**The Chair:** Any volunteers from the staff?

**Mr Burns:** Just to be clear that the discussion in the auditor's report of a transaction that had some of the characteristics you just identified is not a transaction that involves Woodgreen Community Housing. It's a different transaction.

**Mr Turnbull:** Does it involve the people who are players in the development?

**Mr Burns:** No, it's completely in a different place. If you have an apprehension or evidence or material or something about the Woodgreen Community Housing development proposal that we may not have had that you wish us to look at and write you about, we would be happy to do that.

**Mr Turnbull:** You're telling me it's a different development that has these characteristics.

**Mr Burns:** Yes. That's what I advised the public accounts committee, and I also explained at some length, at that point, the history of that particular transaction and how it had been assessed.

**Mr Turnbull:** And had there been profit made by the people who were participants, the sponsors of this?

**Mr Burns:** I'm certain there was, because the land development industry is a private sector operation in



this province, and people seek to make a profit. This particular transaction was, in my memory, a closing now of a transaction begun quite some time earlier and before the planning approvals had been both sought and granted for the land, so that the land itself had changed in value quite considerably over the period of time between the origins of the land transaction and its closing.

**Mr Turnbull:** But the sponsors of this development were participants in the profit? Is that what I understand from what you're saying?

**Mr Burns:** As to that particular question, that is, who had arranged for the land transaction and who closed it with the non-profit sponsor, and whether there were individuals who, in your question, were on both sides of the transaction, I don't know the answer to that right now. I'm not quite sure that question was asked of public accounts, but again, you've put it to me and we'll go back and give you an answer for that.

**Mr Turnbull:** Yes, and if that is the case, if they have made a profit in this way, particularly of the magnitude we're talking about, I would ask you what actions have been taken by the ministry to in some way get back that money. I mean, the whole concept of non-profit housing is totally violated by this sort of transaction.

**Mr Burns:** The value in that land transaction was supported by appraisals independent of the ministry as well as the ministry's professional appraisal staff.

**Mr Turnbull:** With due respect, all of the Greymac sales and flips were supported by appraisals.

**The Chair:** Mr Turnbull, I wish to recognize your colleague, and the deputy has undertaken to get a fuller explanation for you. With your permission, I'd like to recognize Mrs Marland, who has about two minutes left.

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I'm experiencing the same level of frustration because the time runs out.

I did want to touch, however, on the infamous Bill 90, Madam Minister, because we are receiving calls and letters from all over the province in opposition to basement apartments being as of right. As you know, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, is also very much concerned about what this is going to do to their municipal planning. I notice that somewhere in your comments you have said, in response to my question about Bill 90, that it's a great way to provide additional affordable housing with no cost to the taxpayer.

What I would like to know is: Are you still going to call it for second reading, and when do you anticipate calling Bill 90 for second reading? Would you be agreeable for it to go out to public hearings? How are you dealing with the concerns of the municipalities and residents that I know you've heard from, because

they're writing to you as well?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** I'm responding to all the communications we're receiving, including many, many, many people who are indicating their support for Bill 90. I know that, as a member of a party which has expressed its concerns about as-of-right zoning for apartments in houses, you will hear from opponents of the legislation, but there are supporters of the legislation also, and there are many of those.

It is our hope to call the bill for second reading this fall and have it go to committee. The exact nature of the committee work I can't predict at the moment, but I would fully expect that municipal concerns will be raised at the committee, as will be the concerns of people who would like to see this legislation in place.

**Mrs Marland:** What are you doing to address the concerns of the municipalities in terms of it upsetting their municipal planning?

**Hon Ms Gigantes:** We're considering every point they raise and will be reviewing all those points before we go to committee. Proposals that come forward that seem to us to make for a reasonable amendment we'll certainly embody in an amendment.

**Mrs Marland:** Do I have another minute?

**The Chair:** About a half a minute. Maybe not: I think the House is about to call for a vote, so if I have agreement that this committee has deemed that it has completed the time allocated for its Housing estimates, if I may proceed directly with the vote.

Shall vote 1701 be approved?

All those in favour? Opposed, if any?

**Mrs Marland:** Opposed. Recorded vote.

**The Chair:** Opposed is recorded by the clerk: Mrs Marland, Mr Turnbull, Mrs Poole. Motion carried.

Shall vote 1702 be approved?

All those in favour? Opposed? I recognize Marland, Turnbull, Poole. The motion is carried.

Shall vote 1703 be approved?

All those in favour? Opposed? We'll record Marland, Turnbull and Poole opposed. Carried.

Shall vote 1704 be approved?

All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Record Marland, Turnbull and Poole opposed. The motion is carried.

Shall vote 1705 be approved?

All those in favour? Opposed? Record Marland, Turnbull and Poole as opposed. The motion is carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Housing be approved?

All those in favour? Opposed? We shall record Marland, Turnbull and Poole opposed. The motion is carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of

Housing be reported to the House? All those in favour?

**Mr Lessard:** We just voted on that.

**The Chair:** No, I just approved them. Now we're reporting them to the House, Mr Lessard.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Housing be reported to the House as approved?

All those in favour? Opposed? We shall record Marland, Turnbull and Poole as opposed. That motion is carried.

This meeting stands—

**Mr Wiseman:** Mr Chairman, I would like to move that the estimates for the Ministry of Health be held in committee room 2, the same room in which the other ministry estimates have been held.

**The Chair:** That motion is out of order, Mr Wiseman.

**Mr Wiseman:** You were going to explain to me why it was out of order?

**The Chair:** Because I don't have a quorum at the moment. The previous time, it was out of order because it wasn't—

**Mr Wiseman:** We have six members here.

**Mr Donald Abel (Wentworth North):** Six members plus the Chair; that's a quorum.

**The Chair:** You were out of order in terms of your time placement. You're also out of order with respect to the fact that I don't have a quorum.

**Mr Wiseman:** I would like to challenge the Chair.

**The Chair:** This meeting stands adjourned, to meet again—

**Mr Wiseman:** I'm challenging the Chair.

**The Chair:** We don't have a quorum of all caucus members. Estimates does not proceed without members—

**Mr Wiseman:** They were here and they just took off, Mr Chair. This is unacceptable.

**The Chair:** Well, if you'd like a full explanation, I am ruling—

**Mr Wiseman:** I am challenging your ruling.

**The Chair:** Mr Wiseman, your motion is, on the face of it, highly discriminatory because it hampers the activities of this committee. By prior agreement, this

committee has chosen the minister responsible for francophone affairs. We had an incident, and I believe you were present, when matters were raised about that, and in order for this committee to fulfil its mandate and provide every courtesy to every minister of this government, we require the flexibility to order up our business in the manner in which the Chair chooses.

The location is available. Quite frankly, your previous motion, which would situ the committee to one location, was highly discriminatory to the activities of this committee and to several ministers who, from time to time, request the services. The consequences also would be rather expensive to this committee, and until such time as I can report back to the committee about the costs associated with us bringing in bilingual translation services—these costs have been estimated and put into our budget, but I, as a Chair, would caution the committee about restricting—

**Mr Wiseman:** My motion—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr Wiseman. You have asked me for a ruling. I'm giving you a very full ruling, and you will sit there until I'm finished with this ruling.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No, he understands the rules. He has asked, and he's interrupted three times.

**Mr Wiseman:** But on a point of order, Mr Chair: You are making an indication—

**The Chair:** You can't raise a point of order on a motion which you have placed on the floor. Those are the rules. Now I am finished.

**Mr Wiseman:** You have misinterpreted what I have said. I have said the estimates of the Ministry of Health, not the ministry of francophone affairs, and that's my motion.

**The Chair:** You asked me for a ruling on my previous motion, Mr Wiseman. This meeting stands adjourned to reconvene—

**Mr Wiseman:** I'm still challenging the Chair.

**The Chair:** You don't have a quorum, sir. This meeting stands adjourned to reconvene the Ministry of Health estimates tomorrow in room 151. The meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1753.







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### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Harrington, Margaret H. (Niagara Falls ND) for Mr Bisson

Johnson, Paul R. (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings/Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud ND)  
for Mr Jamison

Marland, Margaret (Mississauga South/-Sud PC) for Mr Arnott

Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L) for Mr Mahoney

Turnbull, David (York Mills PC) for Mr Carr

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 21 July 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 21 juillet 1993

## Standing committee on estimates

Ministry of Health

## Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Ministère de la Santé

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 21 July 1993

The committee met at 1539 in room 151.

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call the committee to order to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Health.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** Mr Chairman, before we begin—

**The Chair:** Is it a point of order?

**Mr Wiseman:** It's a point of order.

**The Chair:** What is your point of order?

**Mr Wiseman:** Under section 117(a) of the standing orders, page 84, it says that, "A majority of the members of a standing...committee, including the Chair, shall constitute a quorum."

Yesterday, with all six members of the New Democrats here and yourself in the Chair, you ruled that there was no quorum and you ruled—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr Wiseman, on that point of order, I can't really accept a point of order on the activities of the committee that occurred yesterday, when we have the Ministry of Health before us.

**Mr Donald Abel (Wentworth North):** Sure you can.

**The Chair:** I have a motion on the floor at the moment, which is to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Health.

**Mr Wiseman:** I therefore challenge that ruling.

**Mr Abel:** We know the rules, too, Cam. Give us a break.

**The Chair:** We have a motion on the floor and—

**Mr Wiseman:** I believe that a challenge to the Chair has to be voted on.

**The Chair:** I'll have to inquire if I can accept a motion to challenge a decision of the Chair when there's a motion on the floor, if you'll give me a moment. The Chair would like to call a brief recess of five minutes.

*The committee recessed from 1541 to 1547.*

**The Chair:** Thank you for your indulgence and patience while we sought some further clarification from the clerk's office.

As I understand it, we have a motion on the floor to proceed with the estimates of the Ministry of Health. Subsequent to that, I recognized Mr Wiseman. I assisted him in framing it as a point of order. He then stated his point of order, which was his concern about the manner in which an objection raised yesterday was handled by this committee. My ruling was that it was not a point of order, given that we were proceeding with these esti-

mates at this time. He is now challenging that ruling, which was to rule his point of order as not being a valid point of order before this committee in the midst of its estimates.

It is the decision of the Chair to recognize his subsequent request to challenge that and we'll proceed with a vote on that directly. That matter will be referred to the Speaker for him to deal with, to be heard tomorrow by the Speaker. The committee would then be prepared to proceed with the business of the day.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** A point of order, Mr Chairman.

**The Chair:** I can't deal with a second point of order when I have a motion to challenge the Chair. That's not subject to debate. Are we prepared to vote?

**Mrs Sullivan:** I would request a 20-minute recess.

**The Chair:** Thank you. When the vote is called, there is a request for a 20-minute recess for you to assemble your members. This committee is adjourned for 20 minutes.

*The committee recessed from 1549 to 1607.*

**The Chair:** We are called to order. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

All those in favour?

**Ayes**

Carr, Sullivan, Wilson (Simcoe West).

**The Chair:** Those opposed?

**Nays**

Abel, Haeck, Mathysen, O'Connor, Wessinger, Wiseman.

The motion is defeated. Therefore, the clerk will notify the Speaker and that appeal will be heard tomorrow in the House.

Madam Minister, are you prepared to proceed? You have the floor.

**Mr Wiseman:** I understand that there's—

**The Chair:** Mr Wiseman, the minister has the floor.

**Mr Wiseman:** I believe we need a motion to proceed.

**The Chair:** I have given the floor to the minister to proceed with the estimates.

**Mr Wiseman:** But I believe that is a procedural error, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr Wiseman, I have recognized the minister to proceed. We had a motion on the floor to proceed with estimates and we are now proceeding with the estimates.

**Mr Wiseman:** We need to have a vote to proceed with estimates.

**The Chair:** I'm not engaging in a dialogue, Mr Wiseman. I have recognized the minister. Welcome, Minister. Please proceed with your estimates. You have just shy of 10 hours remaining for the estimates.

**Mr Wiseman:** With all due respect, Mr Chair—

**The Chair:** Mr Wiseman, you will be called out of order a second time.

**Mr Wiseman:** I would challenge that, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** I haven't called you out of order. I said you will be. You are interrupting your own Minister of Health. I have recognized the minister and her clock is running. She has up to 30 minutes.

#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** Mr Chairman and members of the committee, I'm pleased to appear here to discuss this year's estimates for the Ministry of Health. I know that the estimates process is both a healthy and a democratic exercise. I already have a flavour that with this committee that is indeed what it will be, and I hope we can make this and the following sessions as useful and as productive as possible.

It's hard in 30 minutes to cover all the activities of the Ministry of Health, but I thought what I would do would be to begin by reporting to you on the status of some of our programs and activities and provide you with an outline of where we stand on the major issues in provincial health care today. In particular, I want to talk about the government's strategy for managing the health care system during this difficult economic period, as well as about the many reforms that are, in most cases, well under way.

Ontario continues to enjoy one of the best health care systems in the world. The fact is that the system works well for the vast majority of people in Ontario. Most citizens get the health services they need, where they need them and when they need them. However, there are many areas where we can do things better, more efficiently and more cost-effectively.

In addition, the traditional health care system, with its emphasis on physician services and acute care hospital-based services, is being threatened by a variety of social, political, philosophical and economic forces. These forces threaten the five principles under which the system operates: universality, accessibility, portability, comprehensiveness and public administration—the principles of the Canada Health Act.

In January 1992, my ministry announced a health reform agenda designed to ensure more efficient use of scarce resources and to shift the emphasis from treatment to health promotion and disease prevention. The reform agenda addresses the financial crisis in the health care system resulting from the spiralling costs of high technology, illness care and the fee-for-service system.

It looks at the reduced transfer payments to the provinces for health and the oversupply of physicians.

Through the process of health care reform, we intend to better manage the health care system, invest more in community-based programs, redress long-standing inequities in the system and take a leadership role in preserving medicare.

Ontario's health reforms place new emphasis on health equity by focusing on groups that have historically faced barriers. Other areas emphasized include better management of the health care system, more effective use of health resources, participation and accountability within the system, review of expenditures, implementation of the redirection of long-term care and reform of mental health services.

New strategies are being developed for oncology, diabetic care, community health, tobacco use and human resources in health care, and new priorities are being identified in the areas of aboriginal health, women's health, children's health, AIDS and rehabilitation services.

Today I'd like to highlight our progress on three of those reforms: hospital restructuring, long-term care and mental health reform. Perhaps the best example that our strategy for change is working can be taken from the hospital sector and the reforms that we have introduced over the past two years. As members of the committee know, the reform plan for hospitals was introduced in November 1991 following a ministry review of hospital expenditures that involved all of the major stakeholders.

The main elements of the plan are to improve hospital management, to address duplication of services, to make hospital operations more efficient and to speed up the shift in emphasis from inpatient to outpatient care. The plan is now being implemented in hospitals across the province, and it's being implemented in an open, collaborative manner that is designed to allow the greatest possible level of local control.

During this process, we have created the joint policy and planning committee with the Ontario Hospital Association to improve the quality of ministry management decisions that affect hospitals as well as to give us a forum for working with the local district health councils and hospitals to resolve specific problems.

If we look across the broad spectrum of the hospital sector, there's considerable evidence that we've made major progress towards greater efficiency without compromising the general level of health of the population as a whole. I want to cite some relevant statistics here, statistics drawn from the period between 1987-88 and 1992-93.

Over that six-year period, the number of hospital days per 1,000 of population has decreased by 25%, while the average length of stay in hospital has declined by 17% to 7.2 days. Hospitals closed more than 5,000



acute care beds over that period, but the number of people treated grew by more than 8%, or about 1.2 million cases. This increase in services was made possible by a 23% increase in the number of day surgeries and an 8% increase in other outpatient services. In fact, day surgery, as a percentage of all surgery, increased over the period from 53% to 70%.

I don't have the figures as to what our hospital bill would be today if those 5,000 beds were still in the system, but I can assure you that it would be much higher. The key point I'm making here is that even if those additional beds had remained available, there's no evidence that our population's overall health would be any better.

In addition to the signs of improved efficiency we're seeing across the whole system, there are many local success stories that I could tell you about. Just as one example, I want to dwell a little bit on the efforts of the Windsor-Essex district health council, which recently completed a major local planning exercise that recommended the restructuring of local hospital services. The consultants' report that they've been evaluating and the community dialogue are talking about reducing the number of hospitals from four sites today to two or three sites when the plan comes into effect.

The DHC's work has been designed to eliminate program duplication, to improve coordination and to strengthen the linkages between the hospitals and the local community. While there's no doubt that a massive amount of work was needed to get to this stage, I think everyone involved agrees that the process will pay significant dividends down the road.

I've singled out the exemplary work done in the Windsor-Essex area, but the committee should be aware that major health system planning studies are also in development or under way in many other communities throughout the province, including Thunder Bay; Sudbury; Guelph; Belleville-Trenton-Pictou, which have come together to do the study; Perth-Smiths Falls; Brockville; Durham region; Sault Ste Marie; Haliburton county; Halton; Peel and York region.

I think it's important to point out in this period of change in the hospital sector that the government's goal has been to minimize dislocation and job loss to the greatest extent possible.

In May 1992 we established the hospital training and adjustment panel. As a result, most hospitals now have local adjustment committees and laid-off workers are receiving adjustment services, and a job registry system has been established to match available positions with health care workers who have been laid off. Through the social contract process, there is agreement that the hospital training and adjustment panel's role should be expanded to benefit all workers in the health field.

Through reforms in funding, better utilization and

better management of our institutions, as well as by establishing effective partnerships between labour, hospital administrators, the Ontario Hospital Association, other ministries, local communities and health care consumers, I believe that we've made great strides towards meaningful change in the way our hospitals are managed and operated. This progress will reduce cost in the short term, but it will also add to the long-term stability and sustainability of the system as a whole.

Another area of significant progress has been the redirection of Ontario's long-term care system, and I suspect we'll be talking about that in greater detail in the hours ahead. It involves a change in emphasis that involves developing more community-based alternatives to institutional care. Our long-term care reforms are predicated on the dignity and the needs of the individual and on the assumption that people should be able to live at home in their own communities for as long as possible.

After completing an exhaustive consultation process that involved all major stakeholders in long-term care delivery, including, I should point out, talking to long-term care consumers and their families, we recently introduced a package of reforms that will ensure the effective coordination of long-term care with other parts of the health care system. They will improve the way nursing homes and homes for the aged are managed and governed and will increase the involvement of communities, families and individual consumers in the planning, design and management of long-term care program delivery.

As with other aspects of our health care reform agenda, I think it's important to point out that the government is not looking to start from square one and to bring in changes simply for the sake of change. Rather, our goal is to enhance the services and programs that already exist and to make the system even better.

#### 1620

I know that some members of the committee may have seen and I referred in the House to a recent article in the New York Times in which on the front page Canada's care for the chronically ill and the elderly was singled out for special praise. I think it's worth quoting parts of that article to the committee today. It said:

"Americans must use their own money for nursing homes or other long-term care until they deplete their assets; then they can qualify for Medicaid, the federal-state health program, a process that often leads to anguish and humiliation.

"No such restrictions exist in Canada, where there are some means tests for government aid but families are not required to sell off their assets. Those who are better off may be required to pay more but rich and poor live under the same roof, eat the same meals, go to the same social functions.

"So great is the fear in the United States of being forced into poverty by the costs of long-term care that more than 2.4 million Americans have bought costly insurance to cover the cost. In Canada, there is no such thing.

"No country has a perfect system, but Canada's, while continuing a process of creative tinkering, has caught the attention of specialists in the United States."

I was very proud of that story and it dwelt on institutions in Ontario and in the reforms that we've made under our long-term care system.

Our revised funding rules for patients in long-term care mean that seniors will not have to worry about being forced to sell the family home to pay for the care they need. Only a patient's income will be considered when fees are assessed. To be fair to everyone, all patients receiving standard care will pay the same and each person will be assured of a comfort allowance of \$112 a month. These changes will mean dramatic savings for many elderly and chronically ill people throughout the province.

I would also point out that our flexible approach to change has already brought new benefits and higher levels of service to many communities. As one example, we can look at Eabametoong First Nation in Fort Hope, some 500 kilometres northwest of Thunder Bay. With assistance from my ministry and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the first nation is building a new seniors' complex and multi-resource centre to provide care for elders from the five communities of Fort Hope, Marten Falls, Summer Beaver, Lansdowne House and Webequie.

None of these communities could support a seniors' home on its own and the closest facility is the EldCap unit in the hospital at Geraldton. The supportive housing provided by the new seniors' complex will complement the existing homemaker program and enable the first nation's elders to remain in their own community for as long as they like. The cost of the facility is modest, and I understand that the ministry also arranged for the city of Thunder Bay to give the first nation some surplus beds from the city's homes for the aged to furnish the new centre.

I mention this example as one of many instances in which we are managing the system effectively and actually improving the levels of service available to many communities. As Ontario's population ages in the future, our government's long-term care reforms will assume even greater strategic importance.

I'm also happy to report that the government is making significant headway in reforming another major area of our health care system, which is the treatment of people with mental illness.

As members may know, approximately 1.5 million Ontario residents, or about 15% of our population, have

some symptom of mental illness. Our mental health reform package adopts many recommendations of the Graham report, *Building Community Support for People*, and is designed to enable communities to tailor mental health programs and services to meet individual needs.

Our strategy is to concentrate the bulk of services on the seriously mentally ill. We're also committed to making services available in a manner that is sensitive to gender, culture and race and to making the system more responsive to the needs of special groups such as forensic patients and victims of violence. In terms of specific outcomes we're looking to reduce suicide, to reduce disability from schizophrenia and other dementias and to create more employment for people suffering from chronic mental illnesses such as schizophrenia.

In the present system, patients are too often hospitalized by default, simply because they can't get appropriate treatment or services in the community. This unnecessary hospitalization is a needless waste of scarce resources. Even worse, it's a tragic waste of lives that could be much more full and productive.

Our goal is to enable people with mental health problems to receive the care and treatment they need, and preferably in their own communities, close to the nurture and support of their families and friends. At the same time, of course, we're committed to investing in modern, well-staffed and well-equipped institutions that can provide appropriate care for those mental health consumers who need it. As proof of that commitment, I would point to our announcement last month that we will spend \$133 million to rebuild the Whitby Psychiatric Hospital.

In 1990, our government inherited a health care system that was virtually out of control, a system fed by annual spending increases in the order of 10% a year for the previous decade. Since 1990, a faltering economy and growing public debt have demanded decisive action to reduce costs and improve management in all areas of public spending, and particularly in health, which accounts for about one third of the entire provincial budget.

First, we sought to protect and preserve Ontario's system of universal medicare through better management of resources, controlling costs and reducing the runaway growth in spending that was such a prominent feature of the system for so long.

Second, we've sought to make sensible and strategic reforms by refocusing the system's priorities and placing a stronger emphasis on factors that lie outside our traditional delivery system but which in fact play a major role in determining the population's health.

As you know, the Ministry of Health's budget is over \$17 billion this fiscal year, and while that's a tremen-



dous amount of money, I would point out that it is a lot less than it would have been had our government not stepped in and made some hard decisions about putting the brakes on spending. In fact, I say with some pride that in the last fiscal year ministry spending grew not by 10%, as it had for the previous 10 years, but by just 1%, and this year ministry spending will increase only marginally, by about one fifth of 1%. This is a tremendous turnaround.

Through the social contract agreements, we intend to reach throughout the health care sector. We are committed to further reductions in costs totalling \$470 million. These additional savings include \$208 million for hospitals, \$193 million for OHIP and the Ontario drug benefit program and \$69 million in other areas of health spending.

Included in the ministry's \$17-billion spending plan is a reallocation of some \$82 million from the traditional health care system to the health promotion, community care side of the health care system. This will mean more money for family planning, for preventing sexually transmitted diseases and for smoking prevention programs. We'll be putting more ambulances on the road and putting more money into improving treatment for diabetics, especially among northern and aboriginal communities. We're opening a community health centre in a public housing project, and we're converting Burk's Falls Hospital into a community health centre. We're diverting almost \$6 million to people with special needs, whether they are brain-injured, addicted or children with mental health problems. In the end, we will have added 4.8% to the health promotion, community side, while decreasing the traditional side of health by 4%.

While we've made excellent progress in slowing the growth of health care spending, let me assure you that the process has not been easy. In fact, for a system that experienced such rapid growth for over a decade, it was often difficult to absorb even the idea, let alone the reality, of major reductions in growth.

1630

I said that putting the brakes on spending meant some tough decisions for the government, but I also recognize that the government's decisions are requiring many others in the health care sector to make equally difficult decisions and choices in hospitals, laboratories, medical offices and other facilities throughout the province.

As members are aware, I recently released a detailed consultation paper on proposed reforms to the provincial drug benefit program. The paper was developed in response to significant concerns from a long list of stakeholders, including prescribers, pharmacists, drug manufacturers and consumers. The paper addresses many issues, including the fairness of drug programs, their cost and their quality assurance and management.

There is no question that reforms are needed in this

area. The costs of the Ontario drug benefit program have grown by an average of more than 16% per year since the early 1980s, driven up by increases in the number of prescriptions, by higher drug prices and dispensing fees and by growth in the number of people who are eligible for benefits.

In the 1991-92 fiscal year, the ODB program paid some 42 million claims at an average cost of \$24.80 per claim, of which \$6.47 is the dispensing fee. Of the \$1.2 billion spent on the program in that year, one quarter was for dispensing fees and the remaining three quarters was for drug products. But even with this huge government expenditure, more than two million people in Ontario today have no drug plan coverage at all.

It may interest the committee to know that the average physician in Canada writes between 4,000 and 5,000 prescriptions a year. For family physicians, the average is between 6,000 and 8,000 prescriptions annually. We also know that some 17,000 Ontario residents each year require treatment for prescription drug problems and that a significant percentage of all seniors admitted to hospital are there because of problems with their prescribed medication.

The fact is that although we've been spending more and more money on drug benefits, there's no evidence that the increases in spending have resulted in an improvement in overall levels of health. With an aging population, it is clear that we must manage drug benefit programs better, both to eliminate inappropriate prescriptions and to ensure that the system remains viable.

Our government's drug benefit reform package focuses on several key goals. These include improving prescriber education, controlling costs to keep the program sustainable, expanding the ODB program to cover more people, particularly the working poor, and forming new partnerships with consumers, unions, professionals and industry in the planning, delivery and evaluation of drug programs. If we are to achieve these goals, all the beneficiaries from the program, manufacturers, pharmacists and consumers, will be asked to share the costs.

I'm particularly pleased that our drug reform package will extend drug benefits to some two million Ontario residents who currently cannot afford or qualify for drug insurance. But I would also point out that through the drug reform secretariat we've made considerable progress in reviewing the management of Ontario's special drugs program, which is designed to cover people whose treatment depends on having access to certain high-cost drugs.

In 1986, the only drug covered by the special drugs program was cyclosporine, which is used to prevent rejection in organ transplants. Today, the program covers 11 different drugs and disease groups. Indeed, my office has received many letters of thanks from patients and parents of children with cystic fibrosis, a



formerly fatal illness. The special drugs program allows cystic fibrosis patients to lead nearly normal lives. Indeed, one patient wrote that the program makes her more employable since it prevents her from becoming a drain on her workplace drug insurance plan.

The drug reform consultation paper was released last month, and we've asked for comments from stakeholders and the general public by the end of September. Once the ministry has had an opportunity to analyse the comments and incorporate them into the proposed changes, our intention is to get on with the process of reform.

In the meantime, we're moving ahead with a number of successful initiatives such as the province-wide computer network that will track prescriptions issued to seniors. This measure should help address the problems of overmedication and inappropriate prescriptions.

There are a number of areas that I've not mentioned which are high on our health care agenda. These include a range of aboriginal and northern health issues, they include initiatives designed to promote health for both women and children, they include measures to deal more effectively with HIV- and AIDS-related illness, to manage the demand and supply of health care professionals in Ontario and to promote more community-centred health care delivery throughout the province.

Ontario is Canada's largest province, and at more than \$17 billion a year, our expenditures on health care alone are larger than the entire budgets of most other provinces. As I've said several times already this afternoon, we must not equate size with quality, because when it comes to delivering health care services, there's increasing evidence that this equation simply does not work. Despite its vast size and large population, Ontario is a network of communities both large and small. Our health care system must be flexible enough to serve people who live in all of those communities, people in Metro Toronto as well as people in Moosonee.

The fact is, our health care system provides a high level of service to most of our people despite the fact that their needs differ just as widely as do the communities and environments in which they live. As one example, I can tell you that the ministry operates 16 nursing stations in northern Ontario. Under this program, the basic health care needs of people living in these remote communities are met at the relatively modest cost of about \$2 million a year. Northern nurses do everything from providing pre-natal care to sewing up cuts and applying bandages. They provide community-based care to the elderly, the sick and the frail, and they serve local residents in a timely manner, backed up by visiting doctors and air ambulance services for the seriously ill.

My point is that in order to ensure the effectiveness of the health care system, we must plan and deliver services based on the needs of the local people and the

communities in which they live. Our success or failure will depend on the extent to which those needs are met.

I'm pleased that our government has had the courage and the conviction to curb the growth in health care spending, and I'm especially pleased and proud that, at the same time, we've made significant progress in reforming that system. We couldn't have achieved so much without the cooperation of our health care partners and other stakeholders, and I'm confident that we have acted together in the public interest by making the difficult decisions that were needed to save the system for future generations in this province.

While I think we can recognize that some of the seeds of change we are putting in place were sown by previous governments, it's clear that no previous provincial government has had the courage or commitment to tackle the need for real change in the health care system by controlling costs and introducing major reforms. I make this point not by way of apology for any shortcomings you might perceive in the ministry's activities; rather I make it to impress upon you how successful and productive our actions have been in such a short time, which has been one of the most difficult periods ever in the province's economic life.

I suspect I have provoked questions and comments, and I look forward to being with you. There are people here from the ministry with all the information that I think anybody could think of asking for. We certainly intend to attempt to provide whatever is needed so that the committee can have a fruitful and constructive discussion of our estimates. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. In accordance with our standing orders, I would like to proceed immediately to the official opposition and recognize Mrs Sullivan.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As we start the process this afternoon, I want to thank the Minister of Health for being here. You may recall that last year we had some difficulty, because the Minister of Health was not with us for the first portion of consideration of the estimates. She ultimately did come, but it caused some difficulty as we started our process.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

1640

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'm sure you wouldn't have.

In opening my remarks, I want to speak specifically about the culture of the operations of the Ministry of Health under this government in particular. I find, particularly over recent months, that there is a clear consensus among most of the stakeholders who have to work with the Ministry of Health that many of the relationships with the ministry and indeed with the minister have deteriorated to the point where major barriers have been erected between the government and

those who are expected to work with it.

In my view, the government has two significant stakeholder groups with respect to health care that it relates directly to and must relate directly to. Of course, the first group is the group of consumers, those people who are guaranteed the right to health care under the Canada Health Act. To a large extent, many of those consumers have come together in groups and organizations that represent a point of view, whether it's a patient support group, whether it's a family support group surrounding a disease or an issue, whether it's groups of seniors, of women, or other organizations that have become the spokesperson for consumers as they face issues and change in the health care system.

The other group of stakeholders is those who deliver the services, whether they're in facilities such as the hospitals or the nursing homes or those who are the health care practitioners and the professionals. Those are the second major stakeholder group.

In each instance, with the stakeholders who are the direct clients of the Ministry of Health, I find that there is an enormous commitment to the revitalization of the delivery of medicare for the end of this century and a commitment to a changed approach to health care delivery to meet the health needs of society that are different from those that existed when medicare was first introduced some 30 years ago.

I think there is little disagreement that indeed we have adequate money in the system, and the shifting of priorities, changed deliveries, changed health status, provide real opportunity for reform. In both the consumer organizations and in the practitioner-provider-deliverer stakeholder organizations, I find an enormous commitment to reform.

But I also find that a significant number of those stakeholders in either group believe now that the Ministry of Health is in a shambles, and that is a direct result of the government's own arbitrary and unilateral approach. I'm going to outline some of those issues, and I hope they will be addressed, if not to my satisfaction, at least to a partial satisfaction of some of the groups who are involved. The sense is that the process of reform is being negated by an adversarial, polarized approach which, as I indicated, has been taken, particularly recently, by the government.

If I can speak with respect to specific instances and examples of that kind of polarization, I have to of course refer initially to the breakdown of negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association. You know that the report of the umpire was one that was a particularly negative one, and I certainly understand why this government or any government would be sensitive about that report. It was a devastating report. It, in my view, was something that had to be corrected, and I believe the minister when she says it will be corrected, that her negotiators will be given a clear mandate and will have

specific issues on the table that are clear and that place the government's position without bias and without distortion.

Let's look at some of the issues that led to that decision. We had the Minister of Health announcing on a day, on an occasion, that physician distribution goals would be changed and altered by a change in compensation plan for new physicians and that the new physicians who were entering the market, some 600, I believe, specialists who were leaving their residency and internship programs, would face a 75% fee differential if certain conditions were not met.

Subsequent to that, we know that the minister called on Dr John Evans, a man whose work I admire enormously, who gathered together a number of other people and presented a report which the Minister of Health then said publicly, in a scrum, that she supported and for which she hoped she would be able to obtain the support of her cabinet colleagues.

Clearly, she did not get that support, because I can tell you, to this day the OMA believes that both of those proposals are on the table. They are substantially different. They are an integral part but only one part of a physician resources strategy, but they are both floating out there and there has been no policy decision or announcement coming from the minister. We have asked for it in the House. My leader asked for it in a question; I asked for it in a question. The residents and interns association has made those same requests for information. It has not been forthcoming. That is the kind of clear difficulty that the minister, through her own statements and actions, has placed on the table that is problematic in dealing with the medical association, and there are many other issues.

The list of the OHIP services which was included in the expenditure control package as proposals for delisting included a proposal which had not been discussed in any way with the OMA, and that is for the delisting of psychoanalysis; I shouldn't say "delisting," but limitations placed on the access to psychoanalytical services. From the OMA's point of view, the issue was added without consultation, although many of those other items were included on that list after consultation, after a review of what was covered through medical insurance in other provinces.

In terms of psychoanalysis, I have a letter which was written to the Premier from Dr Norman Doidge, who is the head of the assessment clinic at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. He speaks of a backgrounder which announced the government policy to limit the number of psychotherapy sessions per patient, and says in this letter:

"It makes no more sense to legislate the number of psychotherapy sessions for all patients in the province than it does to legislate the dose of chemotherapy that every woman with breast cancer will receive or to



mandate that every bridge in Ontario will be 250 feet long. This proposal seeks to fit all patients into the same mould and disparages and discards those who will not fit. When such a policy is based on inaccurate statements about psychotherapy, such statements must not go uncorrected."

Dr Doidge proceeds in this analysis to review material which was included in the backgrounder, a document of the Minister of Health, and one of his conclusions is that the artificial limitation on the number of psychotherapy sessions will mean that a number of patients go untreated.

#### 1650

He says that two target groups are targeted by the decision. The first group is the psychoanalytic patients, 82% of whom have tried briefer treatments without symptom resolution. These patients amount to only 4% of OHIP psychotherapy billings and less than 0.1% of the Ministry of Health budget. The second targeted group, Dr Doidge tells us, are those with severe personality disorders or traumatic histories, many of whom require three-times-a-week treatment.

In his analysis, Dr Doidge is very precise about the kinds of issues which have to be faced and clearly considered in the determination of whether to include or to eliminate a service from medicare coverage.

But his plea is that in unilaterally introducing a policy statement, a cost containment statement that bears no relationship to the health outcome of those to be treated, the expertise of those who are involved in the field, in terms of the providers of this service, and the patients themselves also have a stake in determining and participating in the kinds of decisions that are being made.

The OMA was extraordinarily surprised, I know, as an organization to see that proposal included in the list of items to be changed under the OHIP schedule. Consumer groups of patients were extraordinarily surprised. I will tell you that they feel threatened, and I am told by a number of practitioners that many of them are indeed seeking additional treatment because a new threat has been placed on them and they fear that they will not be able to receive in the future the services they have in the past.

There are other areas with respect to negotiations with the OMA which are of concern. You will know—I don't know if this Minister of Health knows, but certainly the previous minister did—that I was sceptical when the JMC, joint management committee, came into existence. I am now convinced that it is an appropriate mechanism for discussion and believe that many of the initiatives that have come forward, particularly ICES, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, which I'm very impressed with, are valid contributions to reform of the health care system.

As I move on to the next group, the pharmacists, I have to ask why a similar concept could not have been introduced in dealing with the issues associated with pharmaceutical management. The ministry once again rejected the mediator's report, which indicated that the ministry itself had not presented appropriate arguments before the mediator. The pharmacists' association has seen the drug network—which may or may not ultimately be a very valuable, valid tool, but it was announced without consultation. It was announced without consultation on the technology and it was announced without information being provided to the pharmacists' association that the announcement was going to be made.

If all pharmacists are going to be participating in the network, surely the consultation on the technical and technological details associated with the setup of that network on issues surrounding the confidentiality of documentation etc should have been discussed with the pharmacists' association. They were not discussed with the pharmacists' association. As you may imagine, there was considerable disgruntlement with respect to that issue.

There were changes to the ODB plan in Bill 29, hidden in a bill that clearly was, if not an attempt to be duplicitous, one that, it seemed to me, did not provide any indication of a healthy respect for the pharmacists themselves and for their organization.

The issues that were on the table in connection with Bill 29 were ones that had not been discussed. The ministry has refused to set up a joint committee to discuss issues beyond the compensation issues, which are only one aspect of matters that should be on the table with pharmacists. If there is going to be, by example, an attempt to ensure that there is an increase and a particular commitment among the entire pharmacy profession to education with respect to the use of particular drugs, surely that kind of pharmaceutical management program should be on the table as a matter of discussion on a continuing committee basis with the OPA. It's not there.

I can move on to another sector, the hospital sector. We have seen this afternoon a news conference sponsored by the Ontario Hospital Association saying that the Ontario Hospital Association will not be signing the proposed health sector framework agreement. They are quoted as saying, "This is a bad deal for health care, bad for hospitals, bad for hospital workers and bad for all of those who use hospital services in the province."

You will know and I think you will agree that the hospitals in fact did sit at the table when many other groups and organizations such as the pharmacists did not. My view was that they wanted to participate in order to reach an agreement that was implementable. Their news conference today indicates that in fact it will be more beneficial for hospitals to have an agreement



imposed under the fail-safe factor than it would have been for them to be a part of the entire social contract talks.

But there are other areas which were of concern to hospitals, and I will just mention one of them because we have a lot of lists of disgruntled people to go through.

When the papers were put on the table with respect to the social contract and the expenditure cuts, one of the things that caught many hospitals quite off guard was that the technical fee decrease under the expenditure control plan was not included in the hospital document. It was included in the physician document. It wasn't until many days subsequent to the issuance of these papers that hospitals received any information with respect to a requirement that was being placed on them because it was not in their paper, and they were not provided a copy of the other document until it was discovered, frankly, by someone who was looking at that sector and asked what implication it would have in local hospital service delivery.

Surprises such as that all the way through the relationship of the ministry with hospitals have been matters of concern for a long time and over many areas. Here's one in which the hospitals are both affected and another provider, in the hospital management of oxygen supply. On June 28, I believe—let me just check this date—there was an information item sent to providers with respect to a change in the delivery of home oxygen services.

The announcement and the directive came as a surprise in the end both to the private providers and to the hospitals because they didn't know it was coming. For the private provider, and I'm just going to move away from hospitals for a moment, the issues which were on the table at that point were the difference between the liquid oxygen and the other form of oxygen delivery and the proportion of the entire supply that should be and could be provided by the private providers.

Clearly, the government was looking for a 20% decrease in total costs and the liquid oxygen is a much more expensive vehicle in terms of delivery, but many people require the liquid oxygen and the physicians themselves must determine which patients require which form of oxygen. But two years ago the home respiratory services association provided data with respect to the service levels, with respect to targets, and negotiations were discontinued, or they did not continue on a regular ongoing basis.

1700

So when the announcement came out, it was a singular surprise, both to the association and the vendors, to see the proposals the ministry had put, which would have changed the compensation from \$790 to \$475 for liquid oxygen and to move the proposals for

the concentrated oxygen to \$400. I suppose that must be the private sector proposal.

What happened, though, would have meant that the people who required the liquid oxygen service, because of the need to change the equipment, because of the incentives which were needed to be put into place to use the concentrated oxygen—because they were not in place, the targets were unreachable. Had there been ongoing discussion held with respect to the implementation of what was a legitimate target, a 20% cost saving in that area with no patients being adversely affected, I believe that the ministry, in working with the association, could have come up with a proposal that would have been workable, that could have been implementable on a time line that was achievable.

But that did not happen, and we have seen questions raised now as a result of that situation where there is concern that it's the intention of the ministry to move all of the oxygen services into hospitals, or at least, if not move them immediately, for a period of time there may well be a duplication of oxygen service provision between hospitals and those that are delivered in the community by the private sector, or there may be an attempt, a third strategy of the ministry, which would mean that the ministry did not want the commercial sector to be involved in home respiratory services at all.

The strategy, the policy direction, is very unclear and, once again, because of the unilateral, non-consultative way the announcement was made, because there were not, immediately before or even in a close period of time before the announcement, discussions with the providers as to the most efficacious way to make change, there is enormous disgruntlement with that particular provider group.

I see these same issues having come to the fore with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and many of the other colleges as Bill 100 was being developed, where the College of Physicians and Surgeons, as you know, had initiated significant work in commissioning the McPhedran report, had presented proposals to the ministry with respect to addressing an issue that was of some concern and for which there is large agreement, extensive agreement, as it's been called, for a zero tolerance attitude with respect to sexual abuse of patients by any practitioner.

What was announced came as a great surprise by the ministry to the colleges affected, because while the ministry had consulted, had welcomed the proposals that had been put forward by the CPSO and other colleges and had heard information from the victims' organizations, when the announcement was made for a one-tier complaint system for all levels of sexual abuse, I will tell you that there was shock in the CPSO. The recommendations that had been put forward had been well considered. There had not been discussion about the change in the approach that the ministry was going to

propose, and when the announcement was made, the first response, and the only response, not only of the college of physicians but of many other colleges and many other individual practitioners, was that this would not work.

I know that the minister, if she hasn't announced this publicly—no, you have announced this publicly—is prepared to bring amendments forward when the bill proceeds, and that will be welcomed. But surely, some of the disgruntlement and some of the culture of antagonism could have been avoided had the discussion and consultation taken place before the jump was made. I am disappointed and I know that the colleges have been disappointed as well.

Once again, speaking with respect to some of the colleges which are affected, the professional bodies which are responsible for the standards and discipline within their own professions, every one of the health colleges that participated in discussions with respect to the consent-to-treatment and advocacy bills and all of those practitioners from the associations, and indeed people from the consumer groups, requested that there be ongoing and full consultation with respect to the development of the regulations under those acts. That has not occurred. No one has seen any work that's being done, or if any is being done, under those regulations.

Just as I'm mentioning regulations, I was speaking with representatives of the nurses' association today with respect to their signing of the social contract and the implications that they felt would be evidenced and experienced by their members. They had indicated that, along with many other stakeholders who were at the sectoral tables, they had requested participation in seeing the regulations under the social contract bill, Bill 48.

They want to review the wording, those who have agreed to sign now; and those who will be impacted by the decisions coming out of the social contract discussions, whether they're imposed or whether they have been agreed to, want to see the regulations before they are enacted. They want to be able to participate, to see if a word change or a direction change, which is clearly a possibility—we have seen that in so many other regulatory developments—that could affect any one of these groups negatively, could be found before the action is taken and not to have to create screams and hoots and hollers later.

I think there was an enormous unease among the consumer base as well about the stability and direction of our health care system. There was frustration about the lack of consultation and planning.

Consumer groups came to see me, and I'm sorry that I don't have time to move on to, by example, those who are affected by changes and reform of the mental health program. But many consumer groups are concerned that

the issues that they have been putting on the table, as consumers in the mental health area, are not included in the mental health papers, are not seen to be a priority of the ministry as reforms to the mental health programs are made and they concur with me that they need to have more input, and they don't see a vehicle for more input.

Even with the consultation paper that's there, the individual who is looking for supportive housing, who is looking for the vocational support and so on, doesn't see an opportunity under the announcements that have been made so far for much immediate progress.

But I think as well that the individual hits that people feel have occurred, the target groups, the people who have been targeted for penalties, whether it's the psychiatric patients; the seniors organizations, which see themselves as having been targeted many times; nursing home residents, who see themselves being targeted through increases in their rents without a phase-in; home care recipients who feel unease about the availability of home care and don't see new services being placed on the ground as other services are being removed; the service deterioration which people see as they have to wait longer in hospitals for emergency or other treatment; longer waiting lines; inadequate information about what change is and how it's going to be brought about. Those are issues that, I think, are really frustrating all of the consumer groups that I speak to. You will, I'm certain, have received many of the same letters as I have, or similar letters.

#### 1710

I think that the long-term care changes which have been presented are one example of where the information is so inadequate and where there is such confusion and fear that people indeed feel that they will not be served, that they do not have a place in health care. Understanding about the operations of that program is limited and there has not been the communications program and the direct involvement of consumers' organizations themselves in ensuring that not only will the changes work, but the people will know precisely how they will work.

The minister looks puzzled. Have a look at your own pink book on the implementation of the long-term care. Everything is very iffy and very long-term. The implementation plan is not clear in any way. The placement coordinating agencies are not clear. The role of the multiservice agencies and the shift from one to the other are not clear. People are very uncertain about where they're going and how they will be served.

Minister, my concerns are that there is an antagonism, a polarization that has occurred between you, your ministry and virtually every one of your stakeholder organizations and that, indeed, that is hindering rather than helping the course of reform of the health care system in Ontario.



**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs Sullivan. I recognize Mr Wilson now. You have up to 30 minutes.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** I appreciate the opportunity to make some introductory comments to the committee as we proceed to review the estimates of the Ministry of Health. I think the host of changes within Ontario's health care system and within the Ministry of Health over the past couple of years have presented this year's estimates committee with a considerable challenge.

I recall going through this process with your predecessor minister last year. I hope this year, in all honesty, it's a little more productive. Ms Lankin was very good at giving answers that contained very little content. Perhaps your style will be a bit different.

My efforts and those of my colleagues on numerous occasions and in various forums to secure critical information about the direction of the changes that the government has made to the health care system and the impact of these changes on the system have been met with resistance and hesitation. Judging by some of the ill-defined or haphazard policy that has been introduced by this government and by this minister, I can only conclude that those matters must be dealt with immediately in this open forum, and I intend to do that during this estimates process.

I think the challenge in front of this committee will be to secure answers to the questions posed by its members. My questions during this committee will tackle numerous policy areas within the Ministry of Health. What has become apparent to me, as the Ontario PC Health critic, and to my party is that there are some troublesome common themes in NDP health policy.

The first is the inappropriate imposition of ideology in the reform of health care services. The second is mismanagement, and I refer particularly to health cards. The third is the lack of vision to restructure the province's health sector in a comprehensive way.

Under the heading of long-term care: The reform of long-term care services in Ontario is one area in which I still have several concerns. One constant source of frustration for the opposition, through the consultation process on Bill 101, was the absence of any sort of detailed funding arrangement from the government.

In June 1991, the Minister of Community and Social Services announced that \$647 million would be spent on long-term care services by the years 1996-97, but during public hearings on Bill 101 the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health was asked to provide a more detailed background of this total. This request yielded no new information.

With the release of the government's policy paper entitled *Partnerships in Long-Term Care* in April, a few more funding details were made available. Even with the few additional details on spending allocations, there

are, however, numerous questions still left unanswered. The government has neglected to include any sort of breakdown on how the money will be spent on these projects. I intend during this committee to pose questions to you, Minister, that should address some of these outstanding matters.

Within the government's expenditure control plan, there was another vague reference to the funding of long-term care reform. This time, the government told Ontario's long-term care residents, clients, that, "Expenditures will be adjusted to reflect the need for the development and approval of community implementation plans." We have no indication from the minister what this actually means in terms of dollars or timing, and hopefully you'll be able to provide us with some assistance in this matter as well.

On June 25 you reannounced funding for one component of the NDP's long-term care reform. That was the expansion of the integrated homemaker program. While the minister claims the government is moving ahead with the reform agenda, she has yet again failed to back this promise by a date by which the funding will flow. Most recently, with the implementation of Bill 101's new user fees on long-term care facility accommodation, seniors feel, I think, that they've been dealt a blow by the NDP.

The government has failed to consider, among other things, the far-reaching repercussions of its policies on residents and their spouses trying to maintain the family home. To remedy the government's oversight in implementing its policy, I tabled a resolution, as you know, two weeks ago in the House that would allow for the phase-in of your new user fees to coincide with the flow of funds promised by your government over the next four years. When your government made the announcement back in October 1991 that it would commit \$647 million to long-term care and community-based services, I think the government was somewhat misleading the public in terms of not making it clear that \$150 million of that committed \$647 million would come from the consumers themselves and would come—

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson, the word "misleading" is a rather strong word here. I'd suggest that the rules of the House do as well apply to committee. It's a rather strong word. I'm not asking you to withdraw; I'm just cautioning and suggesting it is a rather strong word.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, the statement he made about the \$150 million was part of the Liberal government's consultation paper, so if he wants to use it, I won't object.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I just want to make a point to the committee members that I'm in a thoughtful and considerate mood today. That is probably the mildest term I can come up with. I sat through, along with many members here, the long-term care consultations and the committee hearings with respect to the bill, and



it was like pulling teeth to get the government—your government, Minister—to admit that the \$150 million was to come from consumers, that it would be in terms of new user fees.

I raise the point now, even though we've raised it several times over the past year or year and a half, because those new user fees have now kicked in as of the last month or month and a half, and seniors failed, I think, to heed some of the warnings that we gave—and that's understandable, given that most people don't react until they're actually hit in the pocketbook. That's human nature. We're getting a lot of calls to our offices because seniors very much are explaining to us that they're surprised at the new rates in long-term care facilities—nursing homes, charitable homes and municipal homes.

1720

I would say also with respect to long-term care, in regard to the proposed levels-of-care funding scheme, a whole realm of unanswered questions has been encountered. As of yet, the government has not released the specifics of the new classification system that will accompany this scheme. I hope we'll be able to get some additional details through this committee process.

The Ontario drug benefit program: We are still awaiting the release of details that will shed some light on the NDP's overhaul of the ODB. While the seven principles of reform and the six areas for consultation outlined in the government's paper suggest the general format of the government's hopes for a new drug plan, precise details are still missing. What is certain, according to you, Minister, is that Ontario's policy of providing free prescription drugs for all residents over the age of 65 will end some time in 1994.

It is uncertain where the government will draw the line between higher- and lower-income Ontarians. A proposal from your ministry's drug reform secretariat which was leaked in the spring of this year suggested that single persons earning \$20,000 a year, regardless of age, should pay an annual premium as high as \$300 to purchase drug coverage. Families with a total income of more than \$40,000 would face the same expense, but as of yet, none of these figures have been confirmed.

I think seniors in this province need to know now how the government intends to proceed on its initiative to establish user fees on prescription drugs. I would also point out it's ironic that the NDP would be introducing user fees on seniors' prescription drugs. I don't recall your party ever campaigning on this platform. In fact, I recall for the past 20 years the policy of the NDP has been the exact opposite. At every opportunity, members of the NDP express their abhorrence concerning user fees. I think you owe an explanation to the people of Ontario with respect to your policy reversal.

Clearly, in the 1990 election, at the all-candidates meetings that I attended, the exact opposite impression

was left with seniors at those meetings and through the literature distributed by your party. It was very clear to me in going to the doors, near the end of the election, that many people in my riding felt that the NDP indeed had a corner on compassion.

I recall you, along with David Peterson and the Liberal Party, labelling my leader Mr User Fee. If sound a bit bitter over this point, it is because I am. While my party went through the last campaign being honest to people and talking about the need for reform, including reform not only in more general health care but specifically with respect to the ODB, your party I think mislabelled my leader and our candidates. I think if you don't have an explanation, at the very least you owe an apology to the people of Ontario.

In the area of mental health reform, the Ontario PC caucus has been supportive of the shift of certain health services from institutional settings to community-based ones. Certainly, this plan holds merit within the mental health sector. We've also demonstrated our support for this strategy throughout the discussions on the redirection of long-term care. However, we believe that the shift to community-based care must be more than just a change in location of services. The move must be supported by appropriate shifts in resource allocation. This is an argument we made repeatedly during the hearings on Bill 101 and have revisited in the context of mental health reform.

With respect to the resolution that I've tabled in the House, going back to long-term care, that resolution calls on your government to phase in the \$150 million in new user fees over the same period that the government will be putting forward its share of the \$647 million. I'd ask you to consider that resolution.

It seems to me it's unfair that under Bill 101 and under your long-term care changes—I won't call them necessarily reforms—you are asking seniors to pay a whopping 32% increase right now in user fees for accommodation in long-term care facilities, yet your government is in a fuzzy way promising to commit its money over the next four years. I think that's unfair and I hope you'll reconsider it, particularly if one uses the example of rent controls, where this year for accommodation in Ontario landlords are allowed to increase rents by only 4.9%, yet you're asking seniors to cough up an extra 32% immediately.

Back to mental health care: After numerous reports and a decade of efforts by the provincial psychiatric hospitals and community-based services, I think the NDP has failed to introduce a meaningful strategy to reform the province's mental health services and has produced no evidence of serious financial commitment to the restructuring. On June 16, 1993, you, Minister, released a government policy paper entitled Putting People First: The Reform of Mental Health Services in Ontario. The paper is intended to provide a policy

framework for "the transformation of mental health services across Ontario."

But the PC Party, along with advocates for the mentally ill and the health care providers within the sector, is troubled by your government's plan, as the shift of services may very well come prior to the production of a comprehensive plan for establishing needed services and in the absence of the necessary reallocation of funding. It is my hope that this committee will be able to secure some of these necessary details.

What we don't want to see, obviously, is a repeat of what has happened in the past, and I admit that both the PC Party and the Liberal Party share some responsibility for throwing people out in the street without having appropriate community-based services in place. We don't want to see that repeated. Let's learn from the mistakes of the past.

Also, we don't want to see what's currently going on, in my opinion. You mentioned in your opening remarks that you've closed over 5,000 hospital beds in the last couple of years. You take great pride in statistics that show, in your own words, that the general health of the population hasn't been affected by this deinstitutionalization in the hospital sector. In fact, I think you went so far as to say that the general health of the population has probably been enhanced. I would challenge you to tell this committee exactly how you measure the general health of the population. It's a great phrase, but I think you owe it to us to explain what your instrument of measurement is for that.

I, as critic, have been approached and have brought to the Legislature on several occasions many cases of people who have been kicked out of the hospital or many cases where beds have not been available and community-based services are not in place. You know that Mrs Jane Leitch and the Senior Citizens' Consumer Alliance for Long-Term Care Reform earlier this year had a press conference indicating their frustration with respect to the fact that the money promised to the community-based sector in health care, the total dollars that we believe are to be committed, have not flowed quickly enough and that in fact there are gaps in services between those who can't access our hospital services and don't have access, also, to community-based services.

Private sector involvement in health care services: The Ontario PC caucus has been vocal, as you know, in its opposition to the NDP government's repeated attacks on private sector involvement in the delivery of health care services. We believe that public administration of the health care system should not necessarily translate into public ownership of all facilities. My caucus colleagues and I have been consistent proponents of the view that the private sector is a major contributor to the province's health care system, enhancing the quality and

availability of service for all Ontarians.

We defend the critical role of the private sector in the delivery of health care services. We defended that role during the debate surrounding Bill 101, the Long-Term Care Statute Law Amendment Act, 1992. The NDP government, basing its decisions on ideology instead of pragmatism, has shown favour for the not-for-profit long-term care services, thereby ignoring the essential role the private sector plays in meeting the needs of consumers. This makes no sense to the PC Party, or to service providers, or to consumers.

The most recent example of the inappropriate imposition of ideology has been in relation to in-home health care services. What is more disturbing about this decision is the government's obvious disregard for the serious and disruptive spinoff effects this policy move will have on consumers.

#### 1730

There are several practical problems with strict adherence to this not-for-profit preference, including the dislocation of workers, the creation of significant gaps in services and the limitation of consumer choice.

As Health critic, these issues greatly concern me, and I hope this committee process will allow us to discuss some of the implications of the reform.

Minister, your predecessor last year, in fact during this very process, promised me, and I have the Hansard, that she would meet with the private sector home care providers prior to any firm commitment on policy on behalf of the government. That did not happen. Ms Lankin never did meet with the private sector home care service providers; in fact, I would say she very specifically broke a promise she made in this very room last year. I hope we won't see a repeat of that from yourself during this year's estimate committee process.

I note in your opening remarks that there was no mention of the vital issue of health cards. As the committee is well aware, the mismanagement of Ontario's health card system has been an issue of tremendous concern to me and my caucus colleagues. I have been disappointed with the lack of action on the part of this government to address the serious problems within the health card system. Even after the Provincial Auditor and the public accounts committee have discussed at great length the specific areas of weakness within the system, we've seen no action—I repeat: no action—on the part of the government to stem the fraud in the system.

There's still much evidence of yet unresolved problems within the system, as I've demonstrated in the House on many occasions during question period, and during these proceedings I intend to ascertain exactly what the government feels it has done to remedy these problems, because to date I've not been satisfied with the responses from yourself or from your ministry. I



want to know precisely what the government intends to do in the immediate future to stem the health card fraud.

I'll just say as a second-last point with respect to a discussion we had previously on Bill 100, which deals with sexual abuse by health care practitioners, that it's my understanding that both the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the coalition of colleges want to see the government's amendments, the actual wording of those amendments prior to second reading of the bill. I took the opportunity during the recess we had earlier this afternoon to consult with my House leader and my leader's office. I am told, just for your information, Minister, that the CPSO and the coalition of colleges want to see your actual amendments, the actual legal wording prior to second reading.

If I may suggest, with respect, you take that back to your House leader and see if they can't hash out among the House leaders whether we're having second reading within the next couple of weeks that Parliament is still sitting or whether it will be in the fall.

Of course, these are only a few of the areas I hope we'll have the opportunity to explore during the committee's allocated time on the estimates of the Ministry of Health. I hope as well that this committee will be able to learn from this minister how she intends to proceed with Bill 50, the Expenditure Control Plan Statute Amendment Act.

As you know, Minister, my party has voiced its opposition to the principle of this legislation, and we intend to fight it through the legislative process. All Ontarians are eager for further details on the government's intentions for the future of health care in this province, and as PC Health critic I will continue to urge the government to justify its staggering policy initiatives and supply us with rationale for its move to limit, reduce and restrict certain insured health care services.

Again, had my party formed the government after the last election, had we introduced a bill even remotely resembling Bill 50, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that you and your colleagues in the NDP would be hanging from the chandeliers in the Legislature. You would not put up with this behind-closed-cabinet-doors unilateral delisting of health care services. That was never your party's stated public policy. In fact, with respect to Bill 50, I and my colleagues are completely shocked, as were the health care groups, your so-called stakeholders. For example, the OMA tells us that elements of Bill 50 came strictly out of left field and that many of the draconian measures in that bill were not discussed at the joint management committee, the JMC, and that it is unprecedented that your government would want and is in fact using its majority to acquire unprecedented powers with respect to who and how and how often health care services will be delivered in this province to the people of this province.

I think you owe it and your government owes it to

the people of this province who pay for the services through their taxes to step back for a moment, to withdraw Bill 50 and to actually go to the public, which has been done in other provinces and certainly in some of the states in the US, and consult in a meaningful way with respect to asking the public the essential question that being, what services would they like to see insured and what services would they perhaps agree to delist. I think there should be a priority rating of health care services and that priority rating should be established by the public and not by the cabinet behind closed doors, which is exactly what you're proceeding to do.

The PC Party has from the outset supported the principle of cost restraint and committed itself to supporting initiatives that achieve those goals in a fair and workable way. During the debate on Bill 48, the government's social contract legislation, we carefully considered the recommendations of organizations involved in the provision of health care services and we put forward the very thoughtful comments and recommendations made to us. We put those forward in the form of 29 amendments presented in the House during committee of the whole process with respect to Bill 48.

With the assistance of groups such as the Ontario Hospital Association and the Ontario Medical Association, we offered constructive suggestions to the government to improve Bill 48 to make it both fair and workable. To our disappointment, the government refused to even seriously consider any of our ideas and, along with the Liberal Party, rejected every one of our 29 amendments.

Minister, I refer you to the press release issued by the Ontario Hospital Association at 4 pm today during its press conference. The Ontario Hospital Association, on behalf of its 300 hospital representatives, met yesterday and unanimously agreed that it would be recommending that all of the hospital sector partners, the hospitals themselves, members of the OHA, not sign the proposed health sector framework agreement of July 15. The OHA press release reads, in part:

"This is a bad deal for health care, bad for hospitals, bad for hospital workers and bad for all those who use hospital services in this province.

"When we began the process of the social contract, we were told that it was about preserving quality services, saving jobs, reducing compensation costs to balance our budgets and assisting the government to reduce its deficit. The proposed government-union framework deal fails on all counts."

It goes on to say: "We entered this process knowing that there would be reductions in the scope and variety of hospital services available and that there would be job losses resulting from the government's rollbacks of \$160 million under the expenditure control plan and \$261 million from the social contract. That is why we tabled five successive negotiation positions outlining a



wide variety of compensation cost-saving measures aimed at service reductions, minimizing job losses and treating all employees in the sector fairly.

"The proposed government-union framework agreement does not give us the desired flexibility to effect creative measures to avoid permanent job losses and reductions in services.

"In fact, the document moves in the wrong direction altogether. It allows, for example, for movement in the wage grid. For hospitals, that means additional payroll costs of \$53 million a year." That point was made in the Legislature earlier this week by my colleague Chris Stockwell, the member for Etobicoke West.

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"The proposed agreement does contain provisions for a wage freeze, which is nothing more than cost avoidance. It produces absolutely no savings whatsoever.

"The fail-safe provisions of the social contract are more effective in lowering our sector's target. That is because movement on the wage grid is not allowed to undercut the wage freeze and because unpaid leaves of absence are made mandatory in the legislation."

Minister, I just read for your information that release of today from the Ontario Hospital Association. In essence, the OHA has rejected the government-union proposal and decided that it'd be better off under the fail-safe provisions of Bill 48. In your remarks to us this afternoon, you didn't acknowledge that the OHA was no longer going to be at the table. I think it's a severe blow to the social contract talks and I understand fully why the OHA can't endorse the government-union proposal.

I did want to ask you, with respect to that, you said in your opening remarks that you had hoped, through the social contract, to achieve savings of about \$208 million. The OHA release makes it clear that the social contract savings were to amount to \$261 million. I just wonder why the discrepancy between your figure and the OHA. Perhaps you could explain that.

In conclusion, the PC Party supports cost-restraint actions which will preserve the system, not dismantle it. We remain concerned about issues of quality, access and fairness and will continue to fight any measures that could result in long-term pain through inappropriate short-term savings. I thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Wilson. Minister, you have the balance of this afternoon's time, which is about 15 minutes and a little more you're entitled to, to complete your response. We're now in your hands.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps we'll take the 15 minutes and respond fairly generally. With some of the issues that my colleagues have raised, such as long-term care for example, I think we'd probably be more productive to have the officials from the ministry who deal with that program here and deal with some of those comments and questions that people have in some detail on

one of our other occasions. I've made a note of the various areas that have been touched upon and we'll make sure we have the appropriate people here to deal with those issues in detail, rather than me doing it in a more general way.

I do want to respond generally. Let me say that I certainly appreciate what I detect to be an acceptance by both of my critics of the fact that there need to be changes and there needs to be constraint. In fact the critic for the Liberal Party agreed with that and said that the stakeholders, both the consumers and the providers, agreed that the \$17-billion-plus that we now spend on health care was sufficient and that there was a need for reform.

I think if we start at that common agreement, then it makes it at least easier to talk about the broad issues. But I would point out to the members that, okay, even with that common agreement, when you get down to the detail of how do you constrain the costs, what do you actually mean by reform, who is affected by the reform and how much is each particular party or stakeholder affected, then that agreement breaks down, because everybody has their own vision of what reform is or what constraint is. Unfortunately, in many cases it means that everyone else should be reformed, but not their particular group or their particular policy.

When I in my comments said that I thought our government had courageously taken this on, we have done that because we have acknowledged that there has been a lot of consultation, a lot of reports to this province ranging back to Fraser Mustard in the 1970s about the need for reform, but nobody has ever grasped the nettle and begun to do it.

When the member for Halton Centre talks about the disgruntled constituency that's there, let me say to her that I believe that no matter how much one tries to consult, how much one involves people in decisions, how much one includes people in the information network, when it comes to the end of the day, unless you have a total consensus, which is very difficult in this kind of a scheme, there's always going to be somebody who is disgruntled. From my experience in opposition, those people certainly found me early, found me frequently and, to some degree, were often the only side that I heard from, because everybody who was happy and pleased didn't necessarily come knocking down the door.

Having said that, I would not presume to imply that everybody has been pleased with the reforms that we have put in place. Let me refer briefly to some of the comments the member for Halton Centre made and to the various groups that she referred to as being particularly disgruntled. I want to set the record straight on a number of issues.

The member said, as an example of an adversarial approach to issues, that I had announced our proposal

with respect to the discounting of fees for new entrants to the medical profession. Let me remind the member that this is an issue that is being debated in all provinces and between the OMA and the ministry for a number of rounds of negotiations.

In the opening of this year's negotiations, we placed at the negotiating table, before the Ontario Medical Association, our proposal with respect to fee discounting. It was the Ontario Medical Association that held a press conference the next day and released our proposals. I think it is important that the member know that.

I'm one of those who believes that negotiations are less likely to be successful if they're not done in public, and I regret the fact that that was how it started off with the OMA. I am delighted that we are now back at the table and discussing intensely with them the issues, some of which the member has raised. I suspect she may not be happy that I don't go into detail on some of the proposals because they are, as we meet, under negotiation, and I don't want to prejudice that in any way.

The other issue that the member for Halton Centre dwelt upon at some length was the question of psychotherapy, with the suggestion that again this had somehow dropped out of thin air and been a proposal by my ministry. I want to remind her that in fact this too, and the de-insuring of intensive psychoanalysis, has been an object of much discussion over the years.

In fact seven other provinces have de-insured psychoanalysis, and only British Columbia has set published limits, which are one hour per day. The other six monitor the psychotherapy billings by physicians and investigate those whose billing patterns are excessive, and more than 100 hours per year per patient is accepted as excessive by those provinces.

I would also say to her that a working group had been established under the joint management committee which exists between the OMA and the ministry and had been working for about a year on this issue. The final report of the JMC working group recommended specific changes to the OHIP payment policy for 9 of 20 items.

At the OMA's request, a final decision was not made regarding psychotherapy because its division of the psychiatrists within its membership was very much opposed to making any change, so that for us to again identify it as an item where savings could be made and an item for discussion with the OMA was, I think, an entirely logical conclusion of all of those discussions and not at all in the way in which the member has characterized it.

She also talked about the pharmacists not being involved in any discussion of the network with respect to linkages, and that again is far from the fact of how in fact the discussions by the Ontario drug benefit reform

secretariat have been proceeding in its discussions on all aspects of reform. There may be a technical issue here that the OPA per se were not part of it, but certainly the representatives from that association were part of working groups and part of advisory committees, and this is again something that has been much discussed.

Let me just pick up on the point she makes about the need for a new relationship with some of the professions and ask her to consider that as we talk about reform, which means a broadening of the scope of the dialogue and an involvement of all of the professions in the health care system in the debate, I think we have to question, though I'm not ruling it out of hand, whether bilateral agreements with the professions are in fact the most appropriate way to discuss broader issues, because there are certainly, as she has in her enumeration of stakeholders, a broad range of people in the health care system who want to be at the table and to discuss these issues.

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As we wrestle with how best to consult—and we've been accused of consulting to death, so it's interesting to hear my critics today perhaps suggesting we don't consult enough—we have to look at it in the context of reform and perhaps change the way in which consultation has occurred in the past.

The group that has so often in the past been left out of the consultations is the consumers. The member for Halton Centre identified that as primary clients of my ministry, but consumers in every aspect are asking to be at the table and to be heard and are not happy if in fact arrangements are made between one particular profession and the ministry and their point of view is not heard. We have to take all of that into account.

I suspect we will talk at another time about some of the management issues with physicians and with the changes to Ontario drug benefits, so I won't go into that in detail now.

I did want to challenge another comment she made on the mental health reform, that there was no vehicle for more input. Again, we have finally, to the great relief of all the stakeholders, put out the ministry's policy framework and have established an advisory committee on mental health reform precisely to get more input as to how we can make that framework more specific.

She used the phrase "people who have been targeted for penalties." Without dwelling on that, given the time, I just want to take the greatest exception to the use of that kind of a phrase to a government that has been struggling to make sure, as we constrain costs and deal with very difficult issues, that any pain or penalty or cutback is shared as fairly as possible and as widely as possible by all participants in the system.

The member for Simcoe West talked about the



imposition of ideology. I invite him to review the literature and go back to the reports. In my remarks I paid tribute briefly to the fact that in much of what we were doing, the seeds had been sown by previous governments, and even by the government of the party he represents. I made reference to the Mustard report and the other work that has been done more lately by the Premier's health council. So to say ideology drives the decisions of this government—if he examines the record, he will find that in fact there is a broad consensus about the reforms we've initiated.

I agree with him. When it comes to the role of the private sector, we believe that health care services are more appropriately delivered by the public sector and that, as we look at scarce dollars, it is in fact appropriate to make sure they are used for services and for wages and not for profit.

I don't know whether you want, Mr Chair, to look in detail at the health card issue. I know the public accounts committee has been doing that exhaustively, but if the committee wishes me to bring people here who can address that, I can.

With respect to Bill 100, again I can detail the record of consultation and involvement with both the survivors of sexual abuse of patients and the professions on that bill. Let me say to both my colleagues who suggested a delay in second reading of that legislation, second reading is to discuss the principle and I don't believe either of my colleagues disagree with the principle in Bill 100, which is that the sexual abuse of patients by professions cannot and must not be tolerated.

The question of amendments to the legislation and the wording of the legislation will be debated exhaustively when we are in committee and in hearings and before it comes back to the House for third reading. My reason for not having shared with my colleagues the precise wording, though they know precisely which sections of the bill we are prepared to amend, is because I think we need to have the hearings and the consultation before we write the amendments. I suspect that had I tabled the amendments before the public hearings and before the hearing from the stakeholders, they might well be accusing me of having pre-empted the discussion and not allowed for consultations.

I ask them to consider the message they are sending by saying that their House leaders will not agree to second reading debate on that legislation, because second reading is debate in principle and, frankly, I want to get on with it.

**Mrs Sullivan:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: I ask the minister to correct the record. Certainly, from my point of view, I put nothing on the table today with respect to House leaders or my House leader giving—

**The Chair:** I don't think the comments were attributed to you. They were done in a generic way and

they were not attributed to you personally.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Motives are being impugned when the leader is quoted as having indicated—

**The Chair:** It's not a point of order, honestly.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Could I ask the minister to correct the record?

**The Chair:** No, you cannot. The minister has the floor.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me then say that as I understand it, those members suggested that the amendments to that bill should be tabled quickly. You've heard my reasons for not wishing to do that, and as I say, my urgent desire to debate second reading so that we can establish clearly, for survivors who think we have moved too slowly and for professions that want to know the opinion of the Legislature, that nobody—and I believe I'm clear in saying nobody—in this Legislature is going to oppose the principle of not tolerating sexual abuse against patients. Let me conclude—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** What is your point of order?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** If I just may correct my record then, because I understand that the minister—

**The Chair:** Your opportunity to correct the record is not a point of order.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I would then ask the minister's indulgence to clarify the point that she's making. It'll take 30 seconds.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Happy to—

**The Chair:** It's not a point of order. I recognize the minister.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Chair, the minister just said that she would be would be happy to allow—

**The Chair:** She needs to have the floor in order to respond, Mr Wilson.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I would be happy to cede part of my remaining two minutes to the member for Simcoe West.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** We can extend your time, Minister, if you want. The simple point I was making is that—

**The Chair:** I'm not prepared to sustain a second challenge today.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** —during the break, I consulted my House leader, trying to be helpful and I was simply passing on to you what came most recently from the CPSO and the coalition of colleges, and the most recent request of my party, from them to you through me, is that they see your amendments' legal wording before second reading. I was passing that on to you for your consideration. It's obvious that you're rejecting that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, I'm not rejecting it. I'm expressing—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Well—



**The Chair:** Mr Wilson, you've stated the case. Please allow the minister.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson, you are out of order.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No. Mr Wilson, you are out of order. You're not being recorded.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Could I have the same opportunity?

**The Chair:** I have recognized the minister—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I recall—

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson and members of the committee, we are here to complete the estimates of the Ministry of Health. Each member and each caucus will be given a full opportunity to respond. We have 10 hours allocated to these estimates. In the one minute that is left remaining before the clock requires us to adjourn, I wish to advise on some procedural matters and then we will reconvene.

There have been several requests for additional information. For the record, I suspect the staff who are here will have no difficulty and where possible will bring that material forward at the commencement of our next meeting on the 27th, and where possible will present that at the commencement of our estimates hearings. That would be helpful. I sense there is agreement from the minister and the deputy.

The Chair, with the responsibility of ensuring fairness of the time, recognizes the minister still has six minutes

owed to her. She may choose to use those. But unless you have a final comment, Minister, I would seek a motion for adjournment.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Happy to adjourn.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I would like—

**The Chair:** I will hear a point of order only, Mrs Sullivan. I cannot acknowledge interjections.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Mr Chairman, the minister indicated that I had—

**The Chair:** You're out of order. Mrs Sullivan, I indicated to you, either I hear a point of order or that is an interjection. I cannot hear an interjection.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Point of order: Bill 100, which I spoke with the minister about at the recess, as did Mr Wilson, is at the request of the government House leader—and I have the list, which is now being discussed and has been discussed among the House leaders, for consideration in the House.

On this list, it says the deferral of Bill 100—

**The Chair:** Mrs Sullivan, you do not have a point of order, and I might show you the standing orders which indicate, quite frankly, that there are certain—

**Mrs Sullivan:** Mr Chairman, the minister has had—

**The Chair:** Mrs Sullivan, you're out of order. This meeting stands adjourned to reconvene on Tuesday, July 27, following routine proceedings, to continue the 1993-94 estimates, in room 151.

The committee adjourned at 1801.









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Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

**\*Wiseman, Jim** (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

#### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Mathyssen, Irene (Middlesex ND) for Mr Bisson

O'Connor, Larry (Durham-York ND) for Mr Lessard

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Mahoney

Wessinger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Jamison

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Arnott

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 27 July 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 27 juillet 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Health

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Ministère de la Santé

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 27 July 1993

The committee met at 1534 in room 151.

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. I have one item to report. I received about an hour ago correspondence from the government House leader which I'll read to the committee. It's addressed to the Chair of the standing committee on estimates.

"Mr Jackson:

"As per your request of June 28, 1993, on behalf of the standing committee on estimates, the House leaders have agreed that this committee will not be authorized to sit during the intersessional."

So that it is clear to all committee members, we will complete our estimates while the House is sitting and then when the intersessional is over—and I believe the date that's been targeted is some time late in September—we can reconvene to continue the estimates. If we do not complete a given estimate, it'll be carried over and be completed when the House has authorized us to meet. Are there any questions at all on that? Okay.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair:** I'd like to reconvene the estimates of the Ministry of Health, to again welcome the minister and the deputy minister, Margaret Mottershead, and to inform you that we have used about two and a half hours of our 10 hours and that when last in our rotation the minister had the floor with approximately five or so minutes to finish her summary remarks. I believe, Minister, you have brought with you some information that came from questions raised by the opposition critics from our last meeting.

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** I just wanted to take a couple of minutes to touch on some of the questions that had been raised, and there are a number of officials here from the ministry, so when the committee decides what areas it wants to address in more general questions, we can get the appropriate people to answer.

There were a couple of points raised when I was here before that I wanted to address, and one particularly, because it was important to set the record straight.

The comment was made or a question was raised about the savings that the ministry hoped to obtain from the hospital sector as a result of the social contract negotiations. The figure used was \$208 million, compared to the figure of \$260 million, which is the one being used by the Ontario Hospital Association.

I think it's important that we be very clear that, in a sense, both numbers are correct. The ministry's figure,

the \$208 million, represents the total savings anticipated from the hospital sector, assuming that the social contract negotiations are successful and that an agreement is reached. As you know, the government provided an inducement for reaching such agreements that amounts to a 20% reduction in the savings required from total compensation where the negotiations have not been concluded. The \$260 million represents the total savings required if no social contract agreement is reached.

I think it's important that those figures be clear, because we have until August 1 to reach an agreement. As I think members know, the Ontario Hospital Association has indicated it is not prepared to sign the agreement. The effect of that refusal may well be that we're looking for savings of \$260 million as opposed to the \$208 million that would be required should a sectoral agreement be reached.

The other question I wanted to address was one where one of the critics spent some time talking about user fees for long-term care. I want to point out first of all that the government's plan for long-term care reform calls for standardizing the accommodation fees paid by residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged right across the province, and that it's important to be very clear about the fact that accommodation fees are not user fees. They represent standard charges for accommodation, costs that residents would have to bear if they were living in the community and therefore required to pay for their own food and shelter.

If they are in a long-term care facility or a nursing home, all of the nursing care and quality-of-life programs, such as physiotherapy, are paid for by the ministry. So when the phrase "user fees" is used in conjunction with long-term care, it is, I would submit, inaccurate.

As the committee will recall, our long-term care program requires the standardization of the accommodation fee for all long-term care residents, and that will be standardized at \$38 per day. Ability to pay will not be a barrier to care, since the subsidy will be provided to those residents who don't have sufficient income to pay for their accommodation. The standard accommodation fee will be \$38. If your income is such that you cannot afford to pay that, then there will be a subsidy available.

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The reason for this was the very wide variation in accommodation fees across the province, ranging everywhere from \$26 to \$90 a day for essentially the same services. Common sense, to say nothing of the

extensive consultations that were carried out prior to introducing our long-term care proposals, told us that this kind of discrepancy was inequitable, and so our proposed changes to the system are designed to address that inequity very directly.

There were also some comments made about mental health reform initiatives. I think all members have a copy of the grey document, the backgrounder, that was made available at the time of the budget. If not, we probably have other copies.

In that, there's a very clear graph that shows the shift over the last 10 years in expenditures on mental health reform from public and psychiatric hospitals to more community-based services. Not only does it demonstrate the shift, but it demonstrates the enormous increase in spending by the Ministry of Health over that decade.

In 1983-94, not just mental health but all of the community-based services—long-term care, community and public health programs—received a combined total of just 10% of health care spending. By contrast, public and psychiatric hospitals were receiving 50% of all expenditures.

If we compare those numbers with the situation this year under our government, we find that long-term care, community and public health programs will receive 15% of all spending and that public and psychiatric hospitals will receive 44%.

These numbers clearly establish a significant shift in emphasis in health care and, I believe, a more appropriate balance in spending of our health care resources than at any other time in the past. There's a great deal of work yet to be done, but we believe we've set a firm direction for policy for which both consumer survivors and mental health care providers have praised our leadership in going in this direction.

The third area I wanted to touch on was the drug reform initiatives, and I suspect in questions we'll get into this in more detail. I wanted to remind the members of the committee that the need for reform in this area has been very well documented from even before the report of the Lowy commission, which I think reported in 1989-90. There had been extensive documentation that overmedication was a major concern for seniors in the province, and so the principles that we've established in our reform initiatives and our current consultations will provide the basis for a major restructuring of that entire program.

As I announced some weeks ago, we've been working with pharmacists throughout the province to implement a new computer network for Ontario drug benefit subscribers, and that network will enable pharmacists to access prescription information about clients of the program. We hope that will really help us to reduce problems associated with overmedication and inappropriate prescriptions.

I also want to point out that our proposal for cost-sharing under the Ontario drug benefit plan is designed not only to keep the program manageable but also, and most importantly, to enable us to increase the number of people who receive benefits under that program so that we can extend essential drug coverage to the two million people across the province who currently have no benefit at all.

Finally, in response to the suggestion that was made last time we met that our government is introducing changes to health care without adequate consultation, let me remind members again, as I said the other day, that we have too often been accused of consulting overly as opposed to moving and getting on with some of these reforms, but each of our major reform initiatives, including long-term care, mental health, hospital restructuring, access to midwifery and abortion services, changes to the Regulated Health Professions Act, proposals for drug benefit reform, each and every one of those reforms, which are now well under way and on which action has been taken by our government, was preceded by extensive consultation and includes extensive consultations and discussions with both consumers and providers. As far as I'm concerned, there's no other way in which we can make the changes that we are suggesting in order to improve the quality of our health care system.

Let me say yet again that we have strengthened the role of district health councils across the province. As I visit different communities, I continue to be impressed by the thoughtful and dedicated work of hundreds of volunteers and staff who are restructuring our health care system through extensive local consultation. Again, that's something that has been called for for many years: Instead of merely a centralized policy-making process, it allows the different regions of the province to have input into what kind of program delivery there is in their regions that reflects the diversity of both the populations and the communities around the province.

But let me say that having consulted widely, having reached a level of consensus about the need for change, there comes a time when you must act. Over the past five years, our health care system has been examined and analysed by numerous expert committees, including Spasoff, Evans, Podborski, Barer-Stoddart and the Premier's Council on Health Strategy. It was the work of all of those experts and the consultations they undertook that helped to develop a consensus on the need for changes in health care management and delivery.

Our government has had the courage and the commitment to tackle some of the major challenges involved in restructuring the system, and to a great extent, we're succeeding in our goal of ensuring that delivery of health care in Ontario is universal, accessible, portable, comprehensive and affordable, those principles from the



Canada Health Act that I quoted in my opening remarks to this committee.

According to the Ontario Health Survey which was conducted as recently as this past January, some 94% of the population had no problem seeking the health care they needed. I know my critics will promptly quote a poll that was released recently by I think the OMA or the Ontario Hospital Association yesterday or today that will dispute that figure, but I would venture to say that this most recent poll perhaps says more about the effectiveness of a \$3-million advertising campaign which says medicare isn't working than it does truly reflect the views of the people of this province about a health care system which they've helped to create and of which they are very proud.

I firmly believe that the vast majority of citizens, the 94% who responded to a poll in January, have no problem seeking the health care they need. Our goal, of course, is to raise that figure to 100% and to continue making the shift to preventive approaches to care and treatment that will keep both our population and its health care system healthy for many years to come. That is the underlying philosophy and approach behind the estimates that this committee is addressing today.

I welcome questions. I have a number of people here from the ministry, and more can be reached speedily if there are issues that committee members wish to address and questions that I haven't answered.

Let me conclude by perhaps suggesting that if it's the wish of the committee to make some determination as to which particular issues it wants to address today or tomorrow, earlier or later, that might be a more efficient use of ministry staff and time. I'd be more than happy to work in that fashion if that's how you normally deal with estimates. Thank you.

1550

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. We are now, at this point, responsible for ordering up how we wish to proceed with estimates. The minister has introduced the notion that we may wish to go by votes and that staff from the various ministry departments would be present on the days that those votes are being discussed. I'm in the hands of the committee, whether you wish to go in rotation, whether you wish to go by votes or whether you wish to proceed generally with the estimates. At this point, I should advise you that I have received no special requests for the specific attendance of a specific department head, ADM or otherwise.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** Are you asking us if we want to vote on each section as we go through it, or are you just asking us if we wanted to have specific staff here to discuss specific policies?

**The Chair:** The standing orders suggest that if the committee determines that we shall deal with a vote item, then we will only deal with those vote items. In

vote 1601, for example, which deals with ministry head office or ministry administration costs, then you would be limited to questions in that area until we were done with that; you would then stack that vote, but you would not be able to come back to administration vote 1601 without unanimous consent. That's how our standing orders address that.

As a new member of the committee, I could only suggest to you that we have operated in a more flexible fashion, but there is a world of difference between the two votes in the Ministry of Skills Development and the four votes in the Ministry of Health which cover \$17 billion in expenditures.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** I felt the process that was used last year when we were dealing with Health estimates was a valuable one, in that we proceeded in rotation with a 20-minute time span for a representative of each of the parties to address questions, and when necessary or advisable, we were able to return to those areas subsequently in discussion, frequently with additional information provided by the ministry so that where an answer hadn't been complete at the time, it was allowed to be completed.

That is my preference. I feel it was most valuable in that as members of the committee we were able to choose our priority areas from a broad and expansive hierarchy of issues that would be faced in health care.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** I agree with Mrs Sullivan. I think last year was very productive in estimates. We simply went in rotation, with 20 minutes or a half-hour allocated to each of the parties. It's almost necessary to do that, given that a lot of questions that come from the parties are general in nature and may deal with ideological factors and don't actually point to any particular vote item. That's what happened, actually, last year: We started to do it by vote by vote, and we ended up deferring to simply a rotational basis.

**The Chair:** Then we will proceed in that fashion. To the extent that there are requests for staff to be here, then the ministry will attempt to accommodate that, but if the persons cannot be, then simply a request that those who could be here would be here. But we are doing 10 hours, so we will have four or five days of estimates; it was simply an attempt to ensure that the appropriate staff were available when members of the committee wished to pursue direct questions, so we'll exercise some flexibility in that regard.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Just with respect to staff present, I know it's difficult for the minister to anticipate every question that might come from the critics or from her own party. I'd certainly say there's nothing wrong or shameful in the fact if the minister simply tells us she doesn't know a particular answer and a staff member isn't available, as long as we get the assurance that we'll have the information we do request at some point in the near future.

**The Chair:** Are there any items that the minister has to hand out, any information that was prepared?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No.

**The Chair:** Not at this time. Fine.

We will proceed in 20-minute rotations, and we will commence with Mrs Sullivan. You have the floor.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Having said that it wasn't necessary to proceed in order, vote by vote, I clearly want to start with vote 1601 relating to the ministry administration, and particularly to those expenses that are listed under main office operating. I'm going to be specifically asking for additional written material with respect to the minister's own staff, the staff of the parliamentary assistants and of the junior minister for Health, including the numbers of employees, salary ranges for those employees and the duties of those employees.

I would also like to see covered, if I could, in that written response, information about what in fact the junior minister of Health does and what specific projects she's undertaking.

In terms of an oral response today, though, I would like to know from the minister why her staffing envelope went up by a quarter of a million dollars, according to the estimates, and to what purposes that money is being put.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The increase reflects the addition of the minister without portfolio to the Minister of Health, though that of course is not all attributed to that. General increases in that staffing—this was for change from 1992-93. I don't know whether a part of that was the change in responsibilities for the Ministry of Health and the transfer of long-term care from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to the Ministry of Health. We'll get you the breakdown of that.

**Mrs Sullivan:** It appears, Minister, that the transfer costs are included under vote 4 and are not included in this area. The minister's staffing envelope is specifically indicated as an expenditure change with an increase of \$253,500. That appears to be, from my point of view and I believe from the point of view of a reasonable person who's looking at expenditures of the ministry, an extraordinary change. It's over a quarter of a million dollars, and indeed there has been no change in the responsibilities of the Minister of Health. You still have the same powers you had last year, the same workload, the same responsibilities to the people of Ontario, but a quarter-of-a-million-dollar increase in the staffing envelope. I think the people want an explanation of that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me again say that there has been a shift in responsibilities, which is the movement of the long-term care to be the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Health. The figures that you referred to on vote 4, I suspect, are the switch in funding and ministry staff into the Ministry of Health. There was a concomitant adjustment in the ministers' staffing envelope as a

result of that, and the envelope for all the ministries has been established to recognize the levels of the various responsibilities and is not the same from one ministry to another.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think that if you were on this side of the fence, you would say that a quarter-of-a-million-dollar increase in staff of the minister is an extraordinary increase. Ordinarily, as I understand it, when a person is seconded from the ministry, that person's remuneration package is still included as an expense of the ministry.

The redirection of the long-term care from Comsoc to the aegis of the Ministry of Health is accounted for in the accounting provisions of the ministry in different ways. It's shown as a reallocation within the ministry and a reallocation or transfer from other ministries. This particular new expenditure of \$253,500 requires an extensive accounting. I'm asking for that, and I'm asking for that before the estimates are complete.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I understand your question, Mrs Sullivan. I haven't got the figures at my fingertips, but I think what you will find if you look across all ministries is that the total staffing for all ministers' envelopes has remained static. What has happened has been some shifting by the Premier's office within that envelope to reflect those ministries, for example, the Ministry of Education and Training, where there was an increase in responsibilities. As part of that, the Ministry of Health is one of the larger ministries, even though in the particular reorganization that occurred earlier this year, the only specific change that had occurred was the addition of long-term care. Within the overall government expenditures for ministers' staffing there has not been a major increase. The redivision of that funding is reflected in an increase in a number of ministers' budgets, of which this is one.

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**Mrs Sullivan:** How many people have you added to your staff to deal with long-term care issues?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The staff, as it was when I became minister in February, has changed, and the numbers I don't have at my fingertips. I will get that in response to the question that you've asked to have in writing.

**Mrs Sullivan:** The other issue I suggest to you is that the long-term care responsibilities had been transferred to Health prior to your becoming minister, and as a consequence I don't see that as having an impact to the level of the quarter of a million dollars that has been indicated. I will thank you for providing that information. I think it's important public documentation.

I'm going to move on to another area because time is short is this rotation. Under 1601-1, "analysis, research and planning," the operating provisions which are included on page 43, while I know that you have given evidence that you're reluctant to talk about issues that



are on the table with respect to negotiations with the joint management committee and the OMA, I would like to have an assurance that the funding for research projects which are being undertaken by ICES, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, are not jeopardized and that all of the research projects that have been initiated will continue and that new ones which were expected to be initiated over the next period of time, whether they're single-year or multi-year, will not be jeopardized in any way.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm happy to give the member the assurance that none of the work of ICES has been jeopardized, as she puts it. Let me say that none of the work of ICES has been affected by the constraints within our ministry and that its budget is intact, which I hope the member will recognize is a recognition by the ministry of the value we attribute to ICES and the enormous potential we see through the work of that institute for providing us, for the very first time in the history of the health system in this province, with some independent evaluation of a number of procedures and practices that have been going on for a very long time and of which there has never been any objective evaluation in the past, which will therefore assist us as we look to see what is in fact medically necessary and how we constrain the cost of the health care system as well as managing it more effectively.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As you know, I'm a strong proponent of the work that's being done by ICES and believe that Dr Naylor and the people who work with him have a substantial contribution to make to the future planning of the health care system here, and I'm sure that not only ICES but the joint management committee of the OMA will be delighted to hear that response.

Also in the research area, we know that Dr John Dirks, who was the former head of the faculty of medicine at the University of Toronto, has completed a study for you, which I understand you have now received, with respect to the initiation of an Ontario health research council. Dr Dirks interviewed Health critics and other members of the Legislature, as well as people who are involved in research activities in the health care field, both from the public and private sector, and his report is now in.

In the course of that interview, my particular feeling was that the initiation of a health research council would be a valuable option, that it could lever funding to coordinate research projects that would be of value in the province. I felt, and indicated to him, that not only should the research council be an opportunity for pure research but also one for market development, and that the development side of research projects should have a clear consideration and be a functional part of the operation of any council.

To date, although you've had the report for some time, we have had no action: We have not seen a

response in terms of what your policy is going to be with respect to setting up a health research council or the kinds of consultation you would undertake now that the report is in and you've seen the thread and the direction of his recommendations—which, by the way, are still limited to being information and advice to the minister and are not publicly available. I don't think Mr Wilson has seen that report, and I have not seen it. I'm sure, however, that it is a fairly complete report and may have indicated other areas of exploration that might be needed. What is the status of that report? When will action be taken? How much have you allocated in your research budget for the initiation of a research council?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me agree completely with the member that the work Dr Dirks did and the whole question of a health research council for the province of Ontario is extremely valuable and has been very helpful. I regret that we haven't been able to move more quickly on the implementation of that, but let me assure the member that that doesn't reflect any lack of interest in moving forward in this respect. In fact, I've had a number of conversations and briefings and meetings about what form such a council should take in Ontario and how such a council can reflect the shift that is occurring in Ontario and our health care system and our desire to make it a better system and to restructure it so that it can take us into the next century. So the options and the recommendations that are in that report are still under review.

I would agree with her that there are in fact links to health and economic development. I think members are probably aware that within the Ministry of Health, an economic development division has been established so that we can make effective links between the exceptional research and innovation that is going on not only in our hospitals but in our academic health science centres and around the province, to make sure we take the greatest possible advantage of that work and transfer the technology to uses that can benefit the economy. As we look to not only a restructuring of health care but a restructuring of the economy of this province, we realize that we need to create jobs in sectors that perhaps we have not looked to as being opportunities so much in the past.

Certainly, with the degree of public money, a third of our provincial budget, that is spent on health care and the power that the health system has as a consumer, there are enormous opportunities to not only do research, but do research that is relevant to the eventual transferring of that research to the marketplace and the creation of new opportunities and new jobs.

For example, just in a simple way, I visited the Baycrest Centre, which has been a pioneer in providing home services to the aged and to the physically disabled. In the work they've been doing, they have researched and developed a number of devices that



make it easier for people to live independently. The devices, such as cutlery, plates, simple things, as well as the design of a kitchen, is the kind of work that I think ought not to be confined to the Baycrest Centre, let alone to the province of Ontario, but is the kind of work that we can showcase, that we can market and create new economic opportunities within the province by highlighting and by promoting. The health economic development division will be doing that.

Let me also say, as I look at a health research council, that I'm very cognizant that as we make this shift within our health care system from institutions to more community-based services and to more community health and public health prevention and health promotion, we have an obligation to develop the capacity to be as scientific and as rigorous in our evaluations and in our look at that side of the spectrum as we are on the strictly scientific side of the spectrum and the institutions, which is more easy to count and to evaluate. For example, work that has been done within the ministry to develop a model for the evaluation of community health centres is the kind of research that I think a health research council can also give us assistance on.

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In summary, I am very supportive of the initiatives Dr Dirks has recommended to us. There is a broader framework within which it is being evaluated and reviewed, and I hope before too long to be able to say something publicly and share that valuable report with the members, as well as the public at large.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you. I will ask for a written response to my next question, which relates to the status of the clinical clerkship stipend for health students. I'd like a report in writing with respect to the dollars that are being spent, the number of students who receive the clerkship stipends, any proposed changes in the funding mechanisms for those stipends.

I would also like, while I have this round, to move on to the legal services division, which is also in the same vote, and ask, first of all, what is the status of the regulations with respect to the consent to treatment bill, and will those regulations be distributed to interest groups for comment before they are brought into force?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I saw Gilbert Sharpe, who is the head of our legal services branch, here a few moments ago. Has Mr Sharpe left or will he be returning?

**Interjection:** He stepped out. I'll see if I can locate him for you.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't know quite what the status of those regulations is at this point, but I'd be happy to get that information and have Mr Sharpe answer it this afternoon.

**The Chair:** Okay. We'll pick that up in the next rotation. I'd like to move to Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate the opportunity,

Minister, to ask you a few questions this afternoon. With the debate that's been going on surrounding Bill 50 in the Legislature of late and the hundreds of letters and petitions we've received with respect to the issue of psychoanalysis and the intention, we believe, of our government to limit access to psychoanalysis, to limit the extent of treatment an individual patient may require in terms of the number of times a patient may visit a physician for psychoanalysis, I'm just wondering if you can enlighten us on what the status of that discussion is within your ministry. As you know, there's a great deal of concern, and here in the committee room today we have people from the mental health community who are very much worried about the future of psychoanalysis in this province.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I certainly am aware of the concern of the people who are here today and who have been following the debate on Bill 50 in the Legislature. I had the opportunity to meet with them earlier this week, and I know that my predecessor, Frances Lankin, had extensive discussions with them, and we understand fully their concerns.

I'm reluctant to be more definitive today about that specific procedure, but let me very clear, as I was in my opening remarks, that it is not the intent of the Ministry of Health to practise medicine or to determine unilaterally what is medically necessary. That is an ongoing debate and is something that we have found is most productively discussed under the auspices of the joint management committee, so any discussions about the delisting or the limitation of payments under OHIP for procedures have always in the past been discussed with the JMC, and will be in the future. We see that as a very valuable opportunity to do that.

Having said that, we have in the past, in conjunction with the JMC, looked at the practices in other provinces, particularly with respect to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, and accepted the recommendation that there should be a differentiation in billing between psychotherapy and psychoanalysis so that there is a greater ability to determine which of those codes is being used by whom so we can more effectively monitor and manage the system.

Beyond that, as that was one of the issues we had put before the profession as part of our expenditure control plan and, as the members of the committee are aware, the negotiations that are ongoing with the mediator and with the Ontario Medical Association are considering in one package both the proposals under the expenditure control plan as well as the objectives of the social contract, all of this is under discussion with the OMA. What we have said to them is that we have a target figure which has been accepted by both sides in those negotiations as the saving we have to achieve.

The way in which that saving is achieved, of course, we want to do in consultation with them, and I remain

optimistic that as a result of those discussions, we will have an agreement with the OMA by August 1. Whether that will reflect the initial proposals that we had made under the expenditure control plan or whether the saving will be achieved in a different way, it is both too early for me to say and inappropriate for me to comment upon.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** If you really wanted to protect the status quo in psychoanalysis, you would simply exempt that from your part of the negotiations at the JMC. Have you done that? If not, why not?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Because, as the member has said so often, the minister should not be practising medicine, and the minister, in consultation with the OMA, wishes to discuss what procedures are medically necessary and the extent to which the insurance plan should cover the costs of procedures and how that is going to be administered. That is the process upon which we are engaged at the moment.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I don't think the JMC discussions should be so secretive. To what extent has psychoanalysis in particular been discussed at the JMC, and what's the status? What's your feeling from those meetings? Is it going to be delisted or limited? I think the public has a right to know.

Bill 50 is so general in the sweeping powers that you want, and the only delistings that have been identified to date—the primary one that's come to the public's attention is psychoanalysis. I think as politicians we have received a very strong opinion, a very loud outcry, from the public that they want to see psychoanalysis protected. While I certainly don't encourage you—I agree with your comments—to practise medicine, I do encourage you to use influence with the JMC to ensure it's thoroughly reviewed. I assume it's being thoroughly reviewed, and if it is, what seems to be the status of psychoanalysis at the JMC meetings right now?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** With respect to the JMC, the JMC had a working group that looked at this procedure and has reported and discussed it thoroughly. The ministry then suggested a limitation on intensive psychoanalysis as part of our expenditure control plan.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** So the ministry suggested that. Before, you said you aren't playing doctor. Now you're saying it is possible for the ministry to make suggestions with respect to medically necessary treatments.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** For discussion with the Ontario Medical Association. The JMC has discussions; the JMC makes recommendations; the JMC does some analysis and does some research. There is then the discussion on actual fee-for-service under the economic agreement that occurs with the OMA. That's what's happening now, and as part of that, some issues that are discussed at the JMC are put on that table, and some may not be. We chose to put that particular issue into

those negotiations. Those negotiations are ongoing, and beyond that I'm not prepared to comment or to negotiate in this forum.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Then I just want to ask you, what else did you put on the table at the JMC? You've admitted to psychoanalysis; we've heard rumours about many others. I gather, because of your admission, that it would be public and appropriate to tell us what else you had put on the table. What other surprises is the public in for?

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**Hon Mrs Grier:** All of the issues under the expenditure control plan were released I think in April or May by the Treasurer as part of that and are very much public knowledge; the question of standard eye tests once a year, the delisting of tattoo removal and a number of non-medically necessary procedures. I can get that list. I haven't got it in front of me at the moment, but I'm sure the member probably knows it off by heart better than I do.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Where I have a problem, and it's been a problem when I've been trying to debate Bill 50, is that you've already predetermined that eye tests, psychoanalysis and tattoos are non-medically necessary—you just said that—and that's why you put them on the table. You told me in your first answer, though, that that was the whole point of the JMC analysis and negotiations and that you aren't prepared to negotiate that now.

It seems to me your ministry has predetermined what's medically necessary and what isn't. Part of the lobbying effort now on behalf of psychoanalysis is exactly that: They're trying to prove the point that they are medically necessary, and who in their right mind said it wasn't a medically necessary procedure? You've just admitted that those were put on the table by your ministry as non-medically necessary procedures. If I sound confused, you should see how confused the public is out there. I want a response to that.

Furthermore, Minister, after the expenditure control plan of April 23, we then had Bill 50 and Bill 48, social contract. When we saw the actual wording of Bill 50, we didn't see the specifics of the delistings, ie, we didn't see psychoanalysis actually named in Bill 50; we just saw sweeping powers. So the public says: "Wow, they've already unilaterally determined what's non-medically necessary. What else is in their bag of tricks, and what else are they planning on delisting?" I think the public has a right to know. My opinion would be that the way you've gone about this with the JMC is that the people who aren't at the table are the patients themselves, and it's a fundamental flaw in the process.

We've seen other jurisdictions, if you want to quote other provinces. They've tried, and certainly some states have tried, to include the public more and ask the public what it feels is medically necessary. That's what's



missing and that's what's frustrating about your government's whole approach to health care reform.

I'd like a clarification on this non-medically necessary. It seems to me you put the cart before the horse in a number of circumstances, and there's mass confusion out there.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I disagree that there is mass confusion.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Well, answer my phone.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** There are a number of issues where there was discussion at the JMC as to whether or not they were considered medically necessary. The extent of psychoanalysis was one of those. As part of our expenditure control plan, we listed many of those items as proposals about where we could constrain our costs. All of that discussion has now been encompassed in the negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association.

As a result of those discussions and whatever is negotiated there, we will be in a position to say quite clearly what will be delisted and what will not be delisted and what will be constrained and what will not be constrained. Bill 50 is the mechanism that is going to enable the implementation of those negotiations.

In previous years' negotiations, there were often issues that were discussed for which there was no implementation mechanism, and I would point out to the member that if he reads the Health Insurance Act he will find there are many powers within that piece of legislation that enable the minister to decide what's paid for and what's not paid for, what's insured and what isn't insured. The proposals in Bill 50 are very much a clarification of that, as opposed to the kind of draconian dictatorship that I know it is in the member's interest to portray this legislation as.

But I want to talk about the member's final point, which I think is a very interesting one, and that is the role of the consumer in these discussions, because that is certainly a concern I have. There is a great desire on the part of many of the professions to negotiate bilaterally with the ministry and to have the privileges that have been afforded to the medical profession with both the Rand formula and the joint management committee and the structures that have been established under the framework agreement.

In my opening comments to this committee and in my final comments today, I think I've made it very clear, as this government does time and again, that we see health care as being more than medical care, which is why enhancement of the role of the district health councils, involvement of consumers and having a broader range of players in the discussions of the kind of care that is to be provided in any one community are very important to us. I really share the member's concern about that and would welcome some constructive discussion at some point about how his objective,

which I share, can be accomplished and what kind of structures we require to do that.

The Premier's Council on Health Strategy, which was established by the previous government, has been built upon by us and is a very useful vehicle for broad policy discussion. When you want to get to the next level of detail, there aren't the same mechanisms. We've been doing it on a regional basis with DHCs, but we obviously need it also on a provincial basis. I think no jurisdiction has yet resolved that issue, and it's time that Ontario began to talk about it. I certainly welcome his attendance at those discussions.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Briefly, I take exception to the minister's comments with respect to my concerns about Bill 50. My concerns are shared by the medical profession and most of the regulated health professions. I didn't make them up. I also have a fairly extensive background in health care, having worked at both the federal and provincial levels in health care. I'm very familiar with the Health Insurance Act. The reason you have Bill 50 is not that it's a clarification of the act, although that's a nice word; it's an expansion of the government's powers with respect to the issues you delineated yourself. Otherwise, you wouldn't need Bill 50, if you didn't want expanded powers. If you think it's simply a clarification and a redundant piece of legislation, then withdraw it. I'd be perfectly happy and I wouldn't have to go up there at 6 o'clock and debate it once again.

With respect to consumers, I know that you personally—and I give you credit for that: You have a long history, and I've spent many a night reading your history, some of it quite entertaining and much of it on behalf of consumers in health care. My only suggestion to you is that rather than the approach you're taking now with Bill 50, with Bill 48, with Bill 29, which I understand is split out now with respect to pharmacists, I think it's unfair to the public to allow changes in health care to occur basically through the media. The media pick up, or critics pick up, or your expenditure control plan, to be fair, floats out a few things you might delist. Then it's up to individuals like those in the room here today to lobby the government, to spend their own time, money, energy and postage stamps trying to get meetings with you, trying to get the message out to the public with respect to, for example, psychoanalysis. I don't think that's the approach.

Although I'm not wholeheartedly in support of the Oregon plan, I like the approach they took over five years in truly trying to reform their health care system, in having full public panel discussions, exhaustive public discussions, not looking at simply a dollar-slash-and-burn approach to health care but a true reform of the system. That's what I would envision as true health care reform.

It's probably one of the reasons that other govern-



ments weren't able to do true health care reform, because they weren't willing to take the time to do that. The slash-and-burn approach to health care does leave the consumer out; you do it behind closed doors. We will find out after your JMC/OMA negotiations what exactly is considered a medically necessary service and what isn't. In the meantime, the public has to sort of batter down your door and try to get your ear with respect to different issues that are floated out that might be delisted. I don't think that's an appropriate way to reform our health care system. It's unfair to the public.

District health councils may be fine, the Premier's council on health may be fine, but I don't think there's anything to replace panels of citizens, just people who are in health care services now, discussing it before the fact. A lot of the stuff you've given the district health councils, up to until recently, was after the fact. Even, I would say, on long-term care you're giving them marching orders to design local programs, but essentially things have been decided ahead of time; that not being the best example, because there were public forums.

But certainly Bill 50 and delistings are, I think, a prime example of where the public isn't at the table and the government's making unilateral decisions. You know you're getting in trouble down the road: You've exempted yourself in Bill 50 from legal liability for anything that might happen in the future.

Those would be my comments. I give the floor to my colleague Mr Carr.

1630

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, let me comment on that.

**The Chair:** In fairness, let the minister give a brief response, and hopefully there'll be time for Mr Carr.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think in his comments the member does a disservice to the many thousands of people across this province who have participated in discussing health care reform. He talks about a specific element of the health care system, psychoanalysis, and from that extrapolates into a unilateral decision to reform the health care system.

I remind him of what I've already said before this committee, of years of reports, studies, analyses of health care, culminating in a vision of health care and in some very specific goals from the Premier's council which were adopted by the Ministry of Health as the vision and the approach and the goals that we want to take as we look to better management, better delivery and a better health care system in the future.

Within that, instead of the Oregon approach of an across-the-board discussion on health care, the discussion has focused on various elements of that: long-term care, mental health reform, now drug benefit reform, all of the things with which the member is very familiar.

Another aspect has been OHIP, which is the insurance part of health care, and how we constrain if not reduce the costs within OHIP. Within that, he's right. There has not been a broad consultation around that. It has been historically something that I think was decided almost unilaterally by the profession.

Under our government, an agreement was reached with the profession and some mechanisms put in place by which there would be bilateral discussions. He has now suggested that we need to go beyond that into more general discussions in a more formalized way than in the discussions that occur in this House and in public.

To say that health reform is driven by the media is completely wrong. To say that we have only come up with a list of expenditure reductions and then dealt with the OMA exclusively on that denies the fact that these were released by the Treasurer for I think the first time as a measure of expenditure reductions that were in fact going to be discussed and, as I said at the beginning, diminishes the importance of the participation of the people of this province in a reforming of health care so that we have a health care system that the taxpayers can afford in the future.

**Mr Gary Carr (Oakville South):** I have a quick question. It's basically a follow-up to our private discussions last week regarding the situation with brain injuries and head injuries. For those who aren't aware, I raised a particular instance of an individual who is in Texas now at a cost of about \$1,400 per day, I guess. There's some concern about the family bringing that person back, and I gave you some of the details. I was wondering, as it relates to this case and to brain and head injuries in general, have you been able to decide what the ministry plans on doing in cases like this?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I know that this has certainly been an issue as we looked at the expenditures for out of country. This was an area where there were in fact major expenditures occurring and where the reinvestment and the establishment of both facilities and experts for rehabilitation within Ontario were very much a priority.

Just recently, we announced the expansion of services in Hamilton for children who have had acquired brain injury, and there has been an approval of over \$3 million to hospitals in Toronto, Sudbury and Thunder Bay with respect to that.

In 1992 I'm told that the supplementary budget for Health stated that \$9 million of new resources would be devoted to acquired brain injury treatment and community care, so the \$3.08 million that I mentioned for Toronto, Sudbury and Thunder Bay was the final part of that \$9 million. That flowed from the recommendations of an internal ministry work group that had looked at both hospitals and community programs.

The specific case you referred to in Hamilton or in

your constituency, I am aware of. I'm afraid I don't at this point have details of where that particular request for repatriation stands.

**Mr Carr:** What about the funding for the Willett Hospital? What is the status of that? Could you update us on that?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** My last information on that, and I stand to be corrected by the people in the room, was that a formal application for consideration of that facility as an independent health facility had not yet been received. That was a couple of weeks ago, so perhaps I could clarify that and get back to you tomorrow.

**The Chair:** Mr Carr, One of those constituent concerns is one of my constituents and I'd like to pursue it, but I'm really required to proceed to the next caucus.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Just for clarification, I take it there are a few other members. I guess that gives me about five, seven minutes?

I'd just like, first of all, to thank the minister for obviously appearing before this committee in order to present her estimates for the Ministry of Health. I take it being Minister of Health these days is at best not an easy task, having to deal with the pent-up demand and the pent-up want within the health care service across Ontario that's been building over the years. Some of the things that quite frankly are needed in the health care sector need to be expanded on at a time when there's not a heck of a lot of money out there, and it's not an easy job to say the least.

I'd like to ask a couple of questions, basically maybe try to demystify some of the things that we're hearing out there. I guess about a month ago, there was a campaign going on about the province. I know it was certainly happening up in my riding, up around Timmins, where doctors were talking about exactly the delisting of services within the OHIP schedule.

Some of the things that were listed—for example, in the paper was a young boy who has an earache can't appear at the hospital or can't appear to the doctor more than once a year because the bad old Minister of Health was going to take that away from him, basically emergency wards would all have to be shut down. I'm wondering if you just can clarify some of that and explain maybe in concise forms exactly what's happening with the expenditure control plan and how the whole issue of delisting is working so that people can better understand what that process is all about and what actually is intended.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Yes, let me address that very specifically because certainly the advertisement that said that if your child had a severe earache you may not get treatment really worried me, as a grandmother of a little boy who has in the past had severe earaches.

The suggestion that a professional physician or a hospital would not provide care to somebody in need appals me. Of course, nothing that we have done as we look at ways to manage the system and to constrain costs deals with medically necessary services. As you heard in my exchange with the previous member, there is debate about what is medically necessary and what is not medically necessary.

I don't intend to practise medicine, but anybody can tell you that a child with a severe earache needs help, and I think it is generally accepted that something to deal with the earache is medically necessary. You don't surely have to be a physician or make any apologies as a politician for saying that's medically necessary.

So for physicians to suggest that somehow that kind of a procedure might not be paid for, I think calls into question whether we're talking about the quality of health care or the amount that is going to be paid to the practitioners within the health care system, which is what the current debate is in fact really all about.

As I said to the member for Simcoe West, the status of suggestions as to changes in the regulations governing what is in fact covered by the province's insurance system, OHIP, and what is not covered by the province's insurance system, are under negotiation with the Ontario Medical Association at this time.

The way in which those are dealt with is by discussion at the joint management committee, which is representatives from the OMA and from the ministry, and is then concluded in the economic fee schedule forum with the OMA at which time after that amendments are made to the regulations.

1640

**Mr Bisson:** In short, we're looking at services that are hopefully not essential services, where people wouldn't have to require service on regular medical—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We have the Canada Health Act, which provides across the country that medically necessary services are available and accessible to all of the people of Canada. We have a system in Ontario where we haven't in fact provided that service. I suspect that a child with an earache in my constituency would find it easier to find a doctor than in some of the remote parts of your constituency.

What we've been trying to do as we look at better delivering those services to all the people of the province is examining how we now deliver them and seeing whether there are some services we currently pay for that in fact we can cease to pay for so that we can provide all of the medically necessary ones to all of the people of the province.

**Mr Bisson:** I just want to bring to you probably something that you've already heard and that probably every other member can share. What strikes me, as we go around the province of Ontario, work within our own



ridings and talk to our constituents around the question of health care, is that I think all of us on all sides of the House agree that the health care system we have in Ontario is second to none and something we want to preserve. Certainly we're working, I think all of us, under that premise.

But I think we all recognize that there are problems in how much money we spend in the health care sector. In some areas we spend more money than we should; in other areas we don't spend enough. I'll give you an example. We have a hospital in Timmins, the St Mary's Hospital, now the Timmins and District Hospital, which acts as a district hospital for the district of Cochrane, which encompasses communities all the way up to the James Bay coast. Unfortunately, the way that particular hospital is funded is basically as a community hospital is my understanding.

I'm led to believe, if I believe what I've been told by some people in the community, that the way we fund our hospitals in some cases is that we fund for services that are actually not even being provided, which would lead you to believe that what's happening, in short, is that a person in a community somewhere, rather than having that service done within that particular community is coming to Timmins because that service is not provided there because of lack of doctors etc, whatever it might be. The hospital in that area is not getting enough money in order to pay for that service while other hospitals in more remote areas actually have surpluses.

I guess what people are really struggling with, I would imagine all over the province, is how can we find a way of trying to get people to sort of let go a little bit and say, yes, we need to recognize that health care dollars are very scarce and we need to find a way to make sure that all of those dollars are properly spent and that we have a better sharing of dollars. That seems to be the big frustration out there, because people are just having a really hard time trying to deal with it.

Two other things on the question of cost: People also ask themselves a very simple question. They say: "We see the government trying to deal with the question of cost. We agree with that." But we look at some of the things that are perceived as being big ticket items as far as how we waste money is concerned and we don't see the government moving on them.

One of the ones that comes up, as we've heard in the Legislature before, is the question of health cards. People have the impression, depending on whose figures you look at, that there is anywhere from \$20 million on the low side to \$700 million on the high side of fraud through the health card system. I know there have been some studies, but what are we doing as far as concrete steps are concerned in order to try to prevent that from happening if it's \$20 million or \$700 million?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond in reverse order to

the questions. I'll ask the assistant deputy minister to respond to the hospital one in a moment.

The health card one comes up again and again. I think it's important that I say again and again that for many years there were numbers in this province. We think there were 25 million people out there who allegedly had a health number and were able to get access to the health care system.

The Peterson government brought in the health card early in 1990 and made the decision, in light of the facts available to it at that time, that what was required was a very simple transition where there was no intensive application process and the risk of somebody not being covered in an interregnum period, and so very simple questions were asked—your name, address, sex and date of birth—and you were given a health card. The result was that more health cards went out and have continued to go out than perhaps there are people.

A year ago we set up within OHIP a registration branch to specifically begin to do some studies and find out the extent of the improper use. Some of it is fraud, and it all gets called fraud; some of it is improper billing by physicians. One of the things in Bill 50 is an expansion of the number of medical review committees so that we can more investigate improper billings. There are a variety of reasons why there is misuse of the health card. Fraud is one of them.

We believe the extent of that misuse is about \$20 million. We think the registration branch is moving effectively to deal with that. We think we can be more effective, so we're looking at what it would cost and what would be involved in going to a more sophisticated card that perhaps had a renewal on it. I think Mr Morin—the member for Ottawa East, is it?—has a bill before the House with respect to a photo, and we've been looking at that. There's the experiment in the north with one that has a microchip that gives your health record as well. That raises issues of confidentiality.

But certainly we're looking at better management of that, better investigation. The member for Simcoe West, I'm sure, is going to give me shortly some information to back up his claim yesterday that 400 cards had been sent out to one point.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** We've already given it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We have been unable to get from him so far the name of the doctor, the address and the area where that occurred. When we get complaints, we want to move more quickly to address them, but we can't just go on rumour; we have to have some facts so that we can investigate and verify it. I want to increase our capacity to do that.

With respect to the nub of health care management, which I think you addressed in your first question, which is, "How do we have the most appropriate services and the most appropriate funding to the areas



that need them?" I go back to my desire to see more regional involvement in management and planning through district health councils. Mrs Mottershead, who has been dealing with that funding for longer years than I have, can perhaps speak specifically to the issues you raise in your question.

**Mr Bisson:** I just want to be clear. I'm talking about the fact that if you have two hospitals, one in a small area, you might be paying, let's say, for obstetrics where obstetrics is actually not performed and is being done in a regional hospital somewhere else that doesn't get the adequate funding because everybody's referring in. That's what I'm wondering about.

**Mrs Margaret Mottershead:** I'd like, before I respond to that, to put the funding issue in a context for you. In 1982 there was a major shift in the funding of hospitals, from a line-by-line full budget that gave an accounting of where the money was being spent in terms of what departments, what procedures, what clinical programs and so on, switched to global budgeting. Global budgeting has recognized the static nature of the operating budget, with the annual increases due to cost escalation and program expansion and other factors.

In 1991 the government recognized that there were some fundamental flaws—and I believe your case is one in point—to the whole funding issue. It initiated a program review of hospitals funding, which had in the committee every single stakeholder in the hospital setting, from front-line worker to departmental level to CEOs to trustees and actually quite a comprehensive stakeholder group, who reviewed all the elements of funding and some of the problems inherent in that.

As a result of that, the government announced a three- to five-year multi-year plan for reform which led to two things specifically: One is the establishment of the operating guidelines for hospitals to be directed by the DHC, to make sure there is recognition of services being provided in a number of centres by different hospitals and to try to rationalize some of those services; and also the establishment of the JPPC, the joint policy and planning committee, a committee that will be looking directly at some of the funding issues, particularly the issue of reallocation that recognizes that services are being taken out from a local area to a regional setting. In fact, some of the referral patterns are changing, and you have to recognize and pay for the services where they are being utilized.

**Mr Bisson:** I think other members of my caucus have questions.

**The Chair:** There are about three minutes left for Mr O'Connor.

1650

**Mr Larry O'Connor (Durham-York):** Minister, I've got a question that my constituents have posed to me, and perhaps you could help them out: my constitu-

ents up in the Georgina area who are serviced by Dr Patricia Marchuk, out of the family clinic in Pefferlaw, Ontario.

The difficulty she has right now, through the expenditure control plan and the capping in services—she's soon to become the only physician servicing that area. There is some sharing of physician services for Beaverton, and they're trying to bring Cannington into the picture; they're trying to negotiate a way of servicing each other and helping each other out. This rural area I represent isn't classified as an underserved area, but through the cap is going to be put in a situation where the after-hours services and emergency services to the area could be limited.

I guess part of the problem is that we need to get more physicians out into the rural areas. Pefferlaw's not that far from downtown Toronto, but to get the doctors to come into rural Ontario is really quite difficult. I wondered if you might be able to help me explain to my constituents what you as the minister have been doing to try to get doctors into the rural parts of the province, especially the constituents who have been sending me the letters, who use the services from the Pefferlaw health clinic.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think the member has raised an issue that has bedeviled Health ministers for 20 years, how to provide adequate coverage to underserved areas of the province. When we say "underserved areas," we tend to think of the north, but as your constituency, which is part of the greater Toronto area, demonstrates, there are areas that are short of doctors that are very close to major urban centres, which may be part of what mitigates against your area: Because you're so close to Toronto, that is where physicians prefer to practise.

I don't think it's only money. To some degree, it's lifestyle: people who want to live in rural areas and people who don't, and people who want to practise medicine in the comparative isolation of rural areas as opposed to in an urban core, where there are backups and specialists. We've gone from the general practitioner/family physician who did everything to a much more specialized kind of medicine. Not all general practitioners feel comfortable practising in isolation, though I agree with you, Georgina and Pefferlaw are not exactly as isolated as the constituency of the member who spoke before you.

I think the solution is looking at the question generally: how we can provide support to doctors in rural areas, as well as looking at the income level. Part of the question they are now raising as we discuss with them limitations on the amount of billing that a general practitioner can have is: "Okay, if there's a limitation, then I'm not going to be doing after-hours and emergency work, because it isn't worth it. I'm not going to be paid for doing that work."

I think the fee-for-service system has not helped us in addressing those issues and that as we look at providing a more consistent level of care around the province, we have to address alternative payment plans. In some rural areas, for example Mount Forest, northwest of Metro, the physicians and the hospital and areas have come together and looked at a global budget where there are salaries and alternative ways of paying for people in order to ensure 24-hour coverage. There are a number of different models that are being looked at.

As part of addressing the whole question of underserved areas, we established some months ago a committee that is known as PCCPME. The title eludes me, but it's a coordinating committee for post-graduate medical education, chaired by Dr John Evans, an eminent policy person as well as a physician. A task group of that, chaired by Bob McMurtry, the dean of medicine at Western, is looking at this specific problem and looking at innovations such as the academic health science centres working with particular regions to provide the peer support and the backup in order to encourage doctors; and looking at the training, because if you want a doctor to practise in isolation, you have to make sure that as they're trained, they have the additional skills required to do that.

So it's a large problem, it's an old problem, and it's one that cannot be solved by a quick fix. It's one that the current financial incentive program has not really addressed, and it's one that I know your constituents want addressed in a fundamental way. I think some of the discussions in policy development we're now having will move us in that direction.

**The Chair:** I believe Gilbert Sharpe is here to respond. Please come forward, Mr Sharpe—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It was Mrs Sullivan's question that I needed help with.

**The Chair:** —to respond to Mrs Sullivan's question with respect to the Consent to Treatment Act. Perhaps Mrs Sullivan might reframe the question, as you were not in the room at the time.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I suppose Mr Sharpe can only answer the first part of the question, which is, when will the regulations for the Consent to Treatment Act be ready? It will be up to the minister, as the political head of the Ministry of Health, to respond to the second part of the question, with respect to whether or not she will circulate the draft regulations to those groups and organizations which have a special interest in their implementation before they are promulgated.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps if Mr Sharpe could comment on the status of the preparation of regulations, then it might be easier for me to respond to the second part of the question.

**Mr Gilbert Sharpe:** Sure. First, I'm sorry for not being here when it was asked and having to do things

out of order a bit. There are, as you know, a number of regulations being worked on. The most important and the one you're probably thinking about is the assessment of capacity; standards and criteria for doing that. We've been meeting with a number of groups on both the adult capacity issues and the children's side, the children's aid societies and experts in children's mental health, to come up with a set of criteria that would be embraced by the providers and by consumers as well.

That process is going well. In fact, I've just been advised that we have another meeting set up on Thursday to do that. We're hopeful that by mid-fall we'd have a set of draft regulations that might be promulgated generally for discussion and further consultation.

There are a number of other areas for consultation that came out during the hearings on the consent legislation: exceptions from the definition of "treatment;" just how many things would be covered in terms of rights advice having to be given; how broadly the act would be applied; the questions of which controlled acts under RHPA might be excluded from rights advice; definitions of "health practitioner" and others.

The work on those areas has also begun, but frankly, the aggressive work, as I said, has been more on the question of assessments of capacity. I hope by Christmas that we would have a full set of draft regulations ready for consideration and for additional consultation. We do have to meet with many of the newly regulated health professions to work with them on which acts should be excluded.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think that answers both sides of your question. There's going to be extensive consultation, and the draft regulations will be shared with many of the groups that have been involved in their development to this point.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Then do I have the minister's commitment that the regulations will not be promulgated until they have been circulated in full to the affected groups and organizations for their comments subsequent to the consultation process that is proceeding now with respect to the drafting?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think Mr Sharpe has described the kind of very open and consultative process that is ongoing. I think I want to see how that proceeds and hope there would be a level of consensus around the regulations. The member certainly has my commitment that the process, as described by Mr Sharpe, will continue and that we want to have as much advice as possible with respect to those regulations.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As we leave this topic, it was very clear in all of our debates and committee discussions with respect to that bill and the associated pieces of legislation that even a single word can make a substantial difference in the ability of health care practitioners



to provide services and of patients to receive the kinds of rights advice or other provisions that they require. Every single group and organization, I underline to the minister, that appeared before the committee made specific requests that before the final regulations in the final stage were promulgated, they would be able to see those draft regulations and to provide comment that would allow, even if it's a single word that would affect the implementation of that bill—that that be done. I hope that's your commitment and not simply a commitment to prior consultation before the regulations are drafted.

1700

**Hon Mrs Grier:** As the member knows, I was not part of that discussion on that particular legislation. I would certainly benefit from, I think, hearing a broader description from Mr Sharpe as to this consultation, as to who has been involved in it to date and whom you would anticipate being involved in it?

**Mrs Sullivan:** If I might, could I ask that this be written? I have a number of other questions in other areas. Perhaps Mr Sharpe can come back to us with that information and then we can also circulate it to those who have an interest.

**The Chair:** It can always be made as a request. Is there any problem with that, Mr Sharpe?

**Mr Sharpe:** No, not at all.

**The Chair:** Okay, I appreciate that very much. Please proceed.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you. I think the minister has learned some good lessons in ragging a puck from Jim Bradley. If I might, I'd like to—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I listened for five years.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** What about Elinor?

**Mrs Sullivan:** And perhaps from Mrs Caplan as well. But I would like to proceed in my next round with a comment and then get my questions on the table and ask the minister to respond subsequent to my getting my questions out.

My first comment related to the discussion with respect to the delisting of psychotherapy which the minister had with Mr Wilson. I think that it's fair, for the record, to indicate that when the ministry first put the issue of the delisting of portions of psychotherapy or the limitation on psychotherapy on the table and discussions were held, the joint management committee recommended that there should be no change in the service delivery and that there was no consensus with respect to the issues about the billing codes. Indeed, Frances Lankin, who was then Minister of Health, issued a letter indicating that there would be no changes, on recommendation of the JMC.

The concern is that the proposals now included in the expenditure control plan are the very ones which were on the table earlier. It tells us, it tells patients and it

tells practitioners that the Ministry of Health is convinced that the services it proposes to delist, or limit the listing of, are not medically necessary.

I have asked the Minister of Health, in order paper questions, for any health outcomes studies which have been prepared with respect to this issue, and the response to that has not been forthcoming. What the proposal on psychotherapy does is to put forward a proposal which would set a quota or ration services which are now considered to be medically necessary. The minister has indicated that this will not be proceeded with unless there is agreement with the JMC. I suggest that if the minister's intent is not to ration services or to establish quotas for services which are medically necessary, whether that's by region, by treatment, by treatment patterns, by the number of times a person receives that treatment, then it is clear that the minister does not need Bill 50 and the minister should withdraw Bill 50.

Having said that, and that's my comment, I would like to move on to two questions, the first being with respect to the role of the boards of directors or trustees or governors of public hospitals in Ontario, who are statutorily required to be accountable for the operations of hospitals and for policy planning therein.

The social contract for the health care sector specifically says, under section 2.2, subsection (f), "In the hospital sector, hospital operating plan responsibilities will be carried out by or under the authority of the JWC," the JWC being a joint working committee which is set up specifically under the sectoral agreement. The JWC will have no accountability for those plans. The boards of directors of hospitals will continue to have accountability.

I'm asking the minister to describe to us where she now sees the accountability of the boards of directors for decisions that are made outside of their purview, and when she intends or if she intends to bring forward new amendments to the Public Hospitals Act, and what her schedule for implementation would be?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me start by responding to the member's comments with respect to psychotherapy yet again, and let me acknowledge that she is correct. This is an issue that has been discussed more than once, and when it was discussed by my predecessor, a decision was made that in fact there would be no change.

As we, in this budget year, began to look ever more seriously at the expenditures of the Ministry of Health, the question of limitations on the ability of the insurance plan to pay for psychoanalysis was again raised and has again been put on the table for discussion.

There is not agreement as to how much psychoanalysis is in fact medically necessary. Most acute psychiatric emergencies are handled by hospitalization, and patients receiving outpatient psychotherapy are thought to



require approximately two hours a week, and there is long-term, ongoing support services available by many non-physician social agencies for psychotherapy.

Patients who require intensive outpatient psychotherapy would be able, under our proposal, to see their physicians more than two hours per week until the maximum of 100 hours is reached, and patients not requiring hospitalization it's believed would rarely exceed this limit. There is some general consensus that long-term frequent psychotherapy is not medically necessary for everyone who may receive it, but I acknowledge that there is not absolute agreement.

In our discussions the other day I don't know whether it was Mrs Sullivan or Mr Wilson said what was happening in other provinces, and I want to correct that by the information we have which is that seven other provinces have specifically deinsured the long-term type of psychotherapy known as psychoanalysis, and that there is agreement generally that psychotherapy beyond 100 hours per year constitutes psychoanalysis, the intensive therapy that is given by psychiatrists.

Of the seven other provinces which deinsured psychoanalysis, only British Columbia has set established limits, which are one hour per day. The other six provinces monitor psychotherapy billings by physicians and investigate physicians whose billing patterns are, in their opinion, excessive, and they consider more than 100 hours per year per patient as excessive.

What we are doing is in fact consistent with the kind of examination of this expenditure that is occurring in other provinces, and as I have said ad nauseam today, is a matter that is currently under discussion with the Ontario Medical Association as we look at a way of reaching both our expenditure control targets and our social contract targets.

The question of hospital boards and amendments to the Public Hospitals Act is one which I have addressed since becoming minister and which is still, let me say to the member, under discussion, so when she asks about when we might anticipate introducing amendments to that act, I'm not in a position to answer specifically, but I would like to ask the assistant deputy minister to comment on the specifics of the role of boards as they are envisaged and as they exist presently.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I believe Mrs Sullivan's question related to the social contract agreement that has been tabled. I don't have the document in front of me, but from my recollection, if you go to the very first part of that document, I believe on the first page, it is very clear on the accountability of the boards with respect to the governance of their institutions.

The notion of the joint workplace committees isn't a new one. It is taken directly from the guidelines we do have now, which are the operating and planning guidelines for hospitals, and builds on the issue of

inclusions by everyone in the workplace in terms of determining hospital planning and budgeting and so on. I don't see that there is a conflict in what is in that document.

**1710**

**Mrs Sullivan:** I have the final document. This is the July 15 document, which several parties have signed and others have not. There is no description of the role of the boards of directors of hospitals included in this document. I've also reviewed the two previous documents and there was none included in those.

If I could go on to my next question. I have a letter which was sent by Bob Reid, chair, and Fred Upshaw, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, to all OPSEU members in the health sector. Written July 20, 1993. It reads:

"Dear Sisters and Brothers:

"On July 15, 1993, OPSEU's health sector bargaining team signed an agreement with the government under the social contract legislation. The agreement protects existing collective agreements, provides expanded training and redeployment opportunities for current employees and provides a \$50-million fund to help save jobs in this sector where a large number of workers earn less than the \$30,000 low-income cutoff.

"It also sets a timetable for implementation of the Swimmer report whose recommendations for a province-wide ambulance service have long been advocated by OPSEU."

Minister, I'd like to know, do you intend to proceed with the Swimmer report? Is the timetable which the OPSEU members have been told is included in the social contract bill your timetable? How much money are you going to set aside for the implementation of the Swimmer report? When will you start buying out private sector ambulance services and at what cost?

**The Chair:** In under three minutes.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** In under three minutes? Well, let me try. The Swimmer report was an examination of all of the ambulance systems across the province by Eugene Swimmer with a recommendation that they all be brought together into one public system. The ministry did an evaluation of what that would cost and found that it would be quite costly, because we would have to buy out the private ambulance systems that now exist. We did not feel that we were in a position to do that.

As part of the social contract discussions, the unions involved brought in a proposal that differed in its estimate of the cost of this from the ministry. When the member reads a letter, which I haven't seen, that indicates that we have agreed to a timetable for implementation of Swimmer, I stand to be corrected, but certainly it was not my impression that this was what had been agreed to at the social contract table.

What we had undertaken to do and what we had

already begun to do was to review both the submissions made to us by the unions as well as the figures that had been our ministry's first estimate of what implementation of the Swimmer report would take, and agree with the unions to a formal review of all of that documentation so that we could arrive at some common understanding of what would be involved in implementation, and from there begin to discuss a timetable for implementation. What we have agreed to is a timetable for review rather than a timetable for implementation.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Then are you committed to the implementation of the Swimmer report as a public policy item?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Not at this point.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I just want to take the opportunity to clear the record. Minister, you took a swipe with respect to my question in the House yesterday. I just want to inform you, in case you haven't got the memo that's already been prepared for you, that yes, twice—a week ago yesterday and again on the following Wednesday—the top bureaucrat in the health card office in Kingston was spoken to by my executive assistant. He was spoken to both in his office and at his home, because at a committee hearing earlier this year, I was given that bureaucrat's home number as he appeared here with the deputy minister.

Frankly, I think I've acted more than responsibly with respect to this matter, because we're trying to dispel, shake off the old-style politics of opposition and I felt it was such a serious allegation with respect to 400 health cards being sent to one individual at one address, that's why a week before raising it in the Legislature, I informed your top bureaucrat. I can't help it if they don't inform you of these things.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It was not a question of not informing me. My understanding is that in that conversation, the ministry had not yet had from you the address, the location and the name of the doctor who was making the complaint. If we have the facts, we have got to investigate, and I certainly share your concern that if this is happening, we have to investigate it and we have to prevent it from happening. I am not aware that we have as yet received the information that we need to effectively make sure that this doesn't happen.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I would agree in terms of I provided all of the information I had. I don't have some of those specifics and I made it very, very clear. I would think that your ministry, after one week, would at least get back to either myself or my staff, though, and as a public service to the taxpayer. That's why I raised it in the House. They had the information for a whole week. I had no one get back to my office. I felt it was a very serious allegation.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps the member would repeat

now for the record what information he has. I want to get to the bottom of this. I'm told that you reported having heard that 400 health cards had gone to one address. As I understand it, you were unable to give the ministry any other details and acknowledged, or your staff acknowledged, that this was a rumour that you had heard. If in fact that's the case, it is very difficult for anyone to identify whether or not this rumour is accurate or inaccurate. I am as anxious as you are to have the facts. So please give us as much as you know about this situation and you have my solemn undertaking that whatever we can do to make sure it is corrected will be done.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** You're exactly right in what you know about this case, I know about this case. What I resent is your ministry doesn't deny that it didn't happen in the media this morning. They simply turn it all around and Mr Verbeek says that I didn't notify your ministry. None the less, I'm not required to notify your ministry; I simply did it on behalf of the taxpayers.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let's be very clear on this.

**The Chair:** No, no.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** No, I'm not required to—

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson. Excuse me, please. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** Order, please.

**Mr Donald Abel (Wentworth North):** Let him talk. Let him go.

**The Chair:** I might let you go, Mr Abel. Please.

**Mr Abel:** Let him talk.

**The Chair:** Please.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Repetition of a—

**The Chair:** Madam Minister, you're out of order, please. I would like to bring the committee to the attention of the Chair.

**Mr Abel:** You've got a great future with the Toronto Sun, Jim.

**The Chair:** Mr Abel, please. Without this becoming argumentative, this is estimates and the committee asks questions of the ministry. I wanted to state that for the record. Secondly, I might suggest that it might be helpful if the minister could tell us what information is required in order to report a case of a potential fraud of a health card.

I remind members that we're on TV. Surely the ministry doesn't want to leave an impression that all this information has to be garnered by the public before a case of card fraud had been determined. But I don't wish it to become a debate as to who said what and what was said on a matter that was raised on the floor of the Legislature. I really would prefer if we got back to the questions about the estimates in this regard. Mr Wilson, you have the floor. Please continue.



**Mr Jim Wilson:** I will ask a question then, Mr Chairman. I will pursue this in the Legislature.

In response to our opening statements today and your response to those, you talked about user fees and you talked about the fact that you don't consider, your government doesn't consider the fees that seniors are required to pay or residents of long-term care facilities are required to pay as user fees with respect to accommodation fees.

1720

I've had this argument with Mr Bouchard and with previous federal Health ministers, including my own minister when I worked for the Honourable Perrin Beatty, you know and I know there's no definition of a user fee in the Canada Health Act nor is there any delineation of medically necessary services.

I think where my party comes from on this issue and why I think it's an important public debate is that most people I talk to in the public feel that any out-of-pocket expense is a user fee, whether it goes for accommodation, whether it goes for an ambulance ride, whether it goes for a physician's note if you're sick at work and required to have a note that you may or may not get reimbursed from third party insurance. I thought we were beyond this debate on whether or not user fees exist—this political debate, as I would say—in our health care system.

I thought we were beyond that because Geoff Quirt and your parliamentary assistant, Mr Wessinger, and a number of other people who sat through committee hearings with respect to Bill 101, the changes to long-term care—we had I think general admission many, many times and we had specific admission during those committee hearings that, yes, they were user fees, that the public would see any out-of-pocket expenses as user fees.

We actually had many administrators come forward and say: "Yeah, you can call them accommodation costs or whatever. The fact of the matter is, it's the consumer's portion of being in our home. Many of us have global budgets. We run our home based on whatever money comes in, and if you want to divide it up on the books one way or the other, that's fine."

I appreciate the politics of calling them accommodation fees, but I still contend that \$150 million of the \$647 million that your government is committing to long-term care reform are user fees from the public.

The reason I think it's important we get beyond that debate is it seems to me that's where the public policy with respect to health care has bogged down in political circles. Do we have user fees, do we not have user fees?

For instance, for you to say that the long-term care fees of \$38 a day, some \$300 to \$400 a month for some seniors in increases, are simply accommodation fees, I don't think gives much comfort to the public. It would

be like saying in the ambulance fee of, say, \$180, which rich or poor in this province—and your government didn't implement it but it has been there; your government did increase it within months of first coming to office—you're sent a bill for ambulance services, whether you're a rubby on the street or someone who can afford to pay that bill.

To say that user fee pays for the engine of the ambulance but not for the gasoline, I don't think the public cares one way or the other. They see ambulance services—and Ms Sullivan and yourself referred to the Swimmer report—as essential services whether or not it's delineated in one of the many books the Ministry of Health has with respect to medically insured services I think is irrelevant in the public mind.

I would appreciate it if the government would get beyond that debate of user fees or not, admit that they're there, admit that there's millions of dollars in the system now so that we can get to a public debate of where those fees should be appropriately placed.

I think we missed that debate with respect to long-term care. It has come as a shock to a number of seniors who are now paying those new fees. All members have received calls over the past three or four weeks when the new user fees were put in the system and the increased fees that were already there. Many people have phoned us and said, "What the heck is going on?" It came as a complete shock to them.

I'd just like to give you the opportunity to comment on that. My party has said we've got to stop lying to the public and pretending user fees don't exist when 20% of most hospital budgets are made up of user fees. Every hospital administrator I've ever talked to—when I first started as the critic in the portfolio, I'd always ask them that. They'd say, "Yeah, about 18% or 20% of our budget come in the form of user fees." People are paying these fees because they feel the services are necessary so they'll pay something out of pocket. I think the public discussion should be, where should those fees be appropriately placed in the system?

What we've seen is around the edges an increase in fees by government, and no admission that these are user fees. I'd appreciate your comments on my suggestion that we should have a full public debate. That was our position in the last election, and I recall your party misrepresented my party's position with respect to that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think this is a discussion that the people of Ontario and the people of Canada are going to have probably for ever, but most intensively in the coming months. I'm very interested in the member's comments, because I was interested yesterday in Prime Minister Campbell's comments that we had to look at what in fact was medically necessary.

I don't think the debate is helped by semantic discussions as to what is a user fee and what is not a user



fee; I would agree with you on that. We have a very good health care system. We have a health care system where the costs have been increasing at a rate that the taxpayers can no longer afford, 8% and 9% in the past. We have now constrained that, but even with that constraint, we're spending over \$17 billion on health care. That is a third of the provincial budget. That is the second-highest cost per capita in the world and the highest cost per capita of any publicly funded system.

In our initial discussions here last week, I said I was pleased that there was agreement in the remarks by both you and Mrs Sullivan that we were spending within Ontario an adequate amount on health care. The debate has got to be, within that adequate amount, what does the insurance plan pay for? I think that's where, then, the definition of "medically necessary" comes in, because there has to be, if you're going to ask the question of what the insurance plan pays for, some determination as to, does it go on paying for everything?

If you take the position that the public, the users, ought to pay nothing for anything related to health care, then we are accepting that at some point we will be spending almost the entire provincial budget on health care, and we have to make the tradeoff between education, recreation, environment, natural resources, all of those other things. If you accept that \$17 billion is an adequate amount to provide good-quality health care for the people of the province of Ontario, then you can have a more focused debate on, within that envelope, what do you spend your money on?

As I look at how to frame the question that way and I look at long-term care—and I recognize that, as we define long-term care, we're talking about providing the care not only in institutions, as it has been provided in the past, but in fact more and more in people's homes. Where we move the provision of traditional health care, nursing, physiotherapy, from the institutions into people's homes, then we look at, how do we pay for that?

If Mr and Mrs X are living at home and getting nursing, physiotherapy, whatever, Mr and Mrs X are, according to their income, deciding what form their home will take, how expensive it will be and how much they will spend on food. They are, in other words, paying for their own food and their accommodation. Mr and Mrs Y, living in an institution, may be getting the same kind of health care, or the health care, nursing, physiotherapy or medicine appropriate to the level of intervention they require. Does it therefore mean that as they move along that continuum they reach a point where they are absolved of the responsibility of paying for the roof over their heads and their food?

In the past, they've been paying a very broad range of prices for that roof over their heads and their food, from \$26 a day to \$90 a day. We accepted the principle

that everybody pays for the roof over his head and his food, but if you are making those expenditures in an institution, it should be standard, and it should be standard at \$38 a day. The nursing care, the physiotherapy, the other traditional health services that you require are provided free of charge whether you're in the institution or, increasingly, when you are not, so if you choose to describe that as a user fee and say that the health insurance plan should be covering it in the institution, then what do I say to the people who are living at home and who are receiving the same intervention and require perhaps the same level of health care? Do we pay for their food and rent as well?

**1730**

I don't think that is what you are saying, but somewhere within that discussion, some decisions have to be made, and we've made the decision that accommodation will be paid for based on income, not assets, by those living in institutions. So that's the rationale for what you call a "user fee" in the long-term care system and what I call a "payment for accommodation."

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I do appreciate your response. I think it has been more reasonable than what we've seen from your party in the past. What I'm trying to do, what I do in every speech I give throughout the province on health care, is dispel some of the myths. You've been very helpful in doing that in terms of agreeing with me, to a certain extent, that it is an out-of-pocket expense.

The public does see the \$38 a day as a user fee. They do see the fee they pay for an ambulance ride as a user fee, or many, many other fees that are paid, out-of-pocket expenses. Even if the public looked for a definition of "user fee" in any of our acts, it doesn't exist.

What I would plead is that in the future perhaps we could have a higher-level debate with respect to this issue, because I just have been fed up for five years.

I saw Mr Bouchard do it. He did an op-ed piece in the Toronto Star two months ago saying Canada has no user fees in its health care system; it was just before the leadership debate. Well, the man's out to lunch, and I told him so. The reason Mr Bouchard doesn't think there are any user fees is that he only delivers, as you know, health care services to native reserves. Essentially, that's the only delivery of services the federal government provides in the area of health care, and there aren't the user fees that we see outside of native reserves. So in his world, the federal government's world of health care, there are no user fees. They did not know, for instance, when I arrived in Ottawa, that people in Ontario are charged for ambulance fees whether they're rich or poor.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If they maintained their transfer payments, maybe we wouldn't have to.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Well, we could get into that

debate. I don't disagree. I'm just trying to edge you along to a more intelligent debate with respect to this issue. When I get letters from the Senior Citizens' Consumer Alliance for Long-Term Care Reform quoting NDP members that user fees don't exist, I go ballistic, because I think that somehow the NDP member is once again propagating mythology. I see Jean Chrétien doing it federally now.

I understand the politics of it very well. I'm guilty myself, in writing some of these speeches for ministers in the past. I just hope we can get beyond that, though, and have the discussion in public of where these fees should be appropriately placed in the system. That was the position of my party in the last election, and I take every opportunity to reiterate that position.

With respect to the \$38 a day, the standard fee, could you clarify for us exactly the intent or the reality out there with respect to this? I visited a number of nursing homes in my riding in the last couple of weeks because administrators have called. They have waiting lists now for ward accommodation because, I understand, individuals are not means-tested if they're in semi-private and private; they're not means-tested according to income.

Frankly, I admit I'm somewhat confused on that. I thought it was a means test across the board with respect to income, whether or not you could afford to pay the \$38 a day, whether you were in semi-private or private. I went into the Good Samaritan nursing home in Alliston the other day and there's a list on the door of 15 people who have requested to move out of semi-private into ward accommodation, and of course, there isn't enough ward accommodation. In fact, your government is encouraging more semi-private and private and less ward accommodation, or is going to allow more in that direction, and there are a lot of people and families caught where they can't afford the semi-private and private fees.

My understanding after sitting through a month of committee hearings was that you were bringing down the differential. We were told that many, many times, that there would no longer be this great differential between semi-private, private and ward. I wonder if you could just clarify all this for us.

It was not my understanding, and I'm sure Mr Wessenger, who was here with me, and Mrs Sullivan also—we had many times the minister and ministry officials saying, "We're bringing down the differentials and everybody will pay the same," but when the program actually got put in place, the phone started jumping off the walls because people got a different thing than what we were told—and what I told my constituents, because the government told me differently.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm going to ask Mr Ennis and/or Mr Laverty to come forward and address some of those, but I must say that certainly as I became involved in this, I was always of the understanding that it was the

standard accommodation fee that was going to be income-tested and that if people wished to pay over and above that for semi-private and private rooms, then of course that would be their choice.

I certainly acknowledge that it has caused and will in the short run cause problems for people who have been perhaps paying the \$26-a-day standard and were therefore able to afford semi-private or private and now find that with the increase to \$38 they're unable to do that. But I would remind you that there are many other people who have been in standard paying much more than \$38 who have seen their per diems decrease. We have of course not had very many letters or phone calls saying, "Thank you, thank you," from those people, but we have, I think, all of us heard from those people whose rates have gone up.

We have with us Mr Michael Ennis and Mr Patrick Laverty from the ministry.

**The Chair:** Gentlemen, welcome. If you could give us your title within the ministry and please respond to the question.

**Mr Michael Ennis:** Perhaps I will respond first. I'm Michael Ennis, assistant deputy minister of population health and community services.

**Mr Patrick Laverty:** I'm Patrick Laverty, the director of long-term care policy.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Could you do this in two minutes or less?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** You've said it all before, before committee.

**Mr Ennis:** I'll do it very quickly. The fact is that before we introduced the change in the basic rate, many individuals in nursing homes and homes for the aged were already paying very different rates, rates going from \$30 to \$40 a day to \$90 a day, so there was a differential rate already in the system at the time.

**The Chair:** Is that the total payment, Mr Ennis, or is that just the portion which the province subsidized, and in each there was a wide variance?

**Mr Ennis:** Yes. In some cases, the up to \$90 a day would be for individuals who were in municipal homes, for example, where they were awaiting an extended-care certificate and did not have one so therefore they were paying the full cost of care; that would be where the higher end of the range would be. I've included both nursing homes, where the extended-care rate was available across all homes, and municipal and charitable homes, where in some cases it was residential care, where you paid the full cost, or where you had a subsidized cost by the government when you had extended-care rate.

In terms of the actual increases themselves, they've applied not only to the basic rate but to those individuals who were already in semi-private, already paying more, and those who were in private, also paying more.



With the change in rate, the individuals who were paying more—yes, they would have a greater demand on the resources because the base has moved up upon which they were operating.

I can give you a very quick example on that. Someone who was in a semi-private accommodation previously would have been paying \$36 a day, and now in the new system the semi-private would be roughly \$10 more. I think that's the issue you have been addressing, in terms of additional pressure on the individual.

We have given guidance to the operators of nursing homes and homes for the aged that where a hardship occurs, they are to sit down with the individual and the family to evaluate their income and to determine and set an appropriate level they can pay in order that they don't have to move, so that they won't have to move from semi-private into ward accommodation. That's the approach we're giving them at this point in time.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** If I could just interrupt, that's the crux of the problem. I appreciate some flexibility with respect to individual negotiations, but we were led to believe, and the ministers have made many blanket statements, that everybody would be means-tested. Many of our homes, according to the old regulations, have these large populations of semi-private and private. They all thought they were going to be means-tested. They're not being means-tested, except on an individual basis where hardship has occurred and there's a great uproar from the family. Is that true? And you are automatically means-tested if you're currently in a ward.

1740

**Mr Ennis:** That's correct. If I could turn to Patrick to answer the means test, because he's been dealing directly with that.

**Mr Lavery:** It's not, strictly speaking, a means test; it's an income test, based only on your income rather than income and assets. That is applied for people who are in ward accommodation. At this point in time, it does not apply with regard to preferred accommodation, but we are, as you are, receiving representations on that matter.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Thank you for your responses. If I may, Minister, that's where the confusion comes from. We saw in press releases and we saw in many speeches from your predecessor that every senior in the province was going to be income-tested. There was no indication out there that thousands and thousands of seniors who may be stuck in semi-private or private accommodation because there is no ward accommodation in the home—they certainly had no warning that this was coming, so to say that this system is fair to all seniors I think was an exaggeration.

Frankly, I think our committee hearings were misled on that. That was never made clear in well over a month of four-day-a-week committee hearings, in spite

of Mrs Sullivan and me asking those questions. I just express my disappointment for the record.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to that. I forget whether the committee hearings were in progress when I became minister or whether they were about to—

**The Chair:** No, they weren't. They were finished.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** They were finished. But there certainly has been no change in policy with respect to that, so the intent of an income test for people in standard accommodation—I'm sure I'm correct—is what the original assumption was upon which the program was based. In fact, when you go back to the original discussion document that was released even before the change in government, the \$150 million as a contribution to the program from the accommodation costs was built into the overall calculations of what the program would cost.

**The Chair:** Perhaps with the permission of the committee, it might allow the Chair to ask a question if it's deducted from my caucus's time. Do I have concurrence?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I agree, Mr Chair.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Go ahead.

**The Chair:** I'll be very brief. I attended the public hearings in the city of London when Mr Quirt was present. I raised a question about this legislation. Specifically, I raised the concern about changing the mix of preferred from basic accommodation. As we all have established, if we're not income-testing persons in preferred accommodation but only in basic, we could potentially have a system where nursing homes or homes for the aged could increase the percentage of beds of preferred accommodation. In a sense, if you use the private market analogy, you could convert to luxury apartments and increase your income. This is something hospitals are doing. We were trying to protect that the available stock of extended-care beds didn't become more exclusive or preferred.

When I asked that question, I was assured by the ministry that the regulations would speak directly to not changing that ratio, that we wouldn't be allowed to change the mix. That occurred in the city of London. I asked the question.

I received a letter from Mr Quirt, representing the long-term care division of the Ministry of Health, wherein he advised operators—I don't have the letter in front of me, but the letter was dated somewhere around July 13 or 17.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** July 13.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Wilson. In it, he says that the ratio of preferred accommodation could be increased by operators from 45% to 65%. This, in my view, is akin to conversion to luxury or more expensive accommodation that is not income-tested. That concerned me.



I didn't rule the "misleading" comment out of order, but it did raise some confusion. Why did the ministry change its assertion to the committee in London earlier this year, and then with regulations, after the bill was implemented, allow for a process to change the more luxury or preferred accommodation mix within institutions across Ontario? I appreciate the indulgence of the committee for allowing me to ask that question on behalf of my constituents. Can anyone enlighten me as to why we changed our policy or the stated intention of the government from six months ago to its implementation for July 1?

**Mr Laverty:** I'm not in a position to indicate what Mr Quirt said in London. We will check the—

**The Chair:** You were present as well.

**Mr Laverty:** Not in London.

**The Chair:** Not the London trip? I apologize. I know you shadowed us extensively.

**Mr Laverty:** So I'm really not able to answer directly to your question with regard to what the statements he may have made in London were and whether those were inconsistent with the final result.

**The Chair:** Could someone explain to me why we're allowing the increase in the ratio of expensive accommodation when you've indicated that you've created a mechanism for people to apply for ward accommodation, at the same time allowing a mechanism to reduce the supply of ward accommodation throughout Ontario? It seems to be two different messages, and I'm wondering which is the operative or primary message here.

**Mr Laverty:** There are two changes with regard to the preferred differential. One of them is with regard to the percentage of beds that may in fact be preferred and the other one is with regard to the premium differential between basic accommodation and preferred.

In fact, what we have is a movement in the differential for semi-private from the previous \$9.88-a-day differential down to an \$8 differential, and with regard to private, from a \$19.78 differential down to an \$18 differential. That relates also to Mr Wilson's earlier question about the explanations that Mr Quirt had given with regard to a reduction in the differentials between preferred accommodation and accommodation which is ward accommodation.

The other movement is as you indicate with regard to the possibility indicated in Mr Quirt's letter to the facilities that the percentage might indeed change.

**The Chair:** Thank you for the indulgence of the committee, and your response, Mr Laverty. Mr O'Connor had not completed a series of questions he was presenting in his rotation. I have no other members of your caucus. Ms Haeck? Mr O'Connor, were you finished?

**Mr O'Connor:** Maybe I could just then expand on

some of the line of questioning that we've been following just briefly for verification.

Minister, the commitment was made by the government for the integrated homemaker service. In fact the announcements were made on the Durham side of my riding, in Durham region. The announcement was made of \$931,000 in additional funding, and of course on the York side of my riding, for all of York region, there was an additional \$1.1 million that was to be delivered for the integrated homemaker service.

Of course, this expands directly from the question that has been raised here about long-term care. I think the commitment being made by the government is going to actually change the way that long-term care has been delivered in the past, and perhaps you might be able to explain to the people viewing here today how this commitment of dollars is going to actually change the way we deliver care to some of the seniors of the province.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It's going to change the way we deliver care, but I think more importantly for consumers of care and their families, it's going to change the way in which you find out what care's available to you. Because one of the greatest frustrations for people needing long-term care and for the people helping them find long-term care has been, how do you know what's available? What's in my community? Where might there be a vacant bed if I'm looking for a nursing home or an institution, and can I get, if it's only Meals on Wheels, the kind of nursing care that I need to enable my elderly relative to stay at home, or myself, if I've got to the point of needing that?

1750

I think the biggest change that people will notice when we have completed the reform of long-term care is one-stop shopping. There will be a multiservice agency, which is the description that has been given to a non-profit community-based agency run by a board of volunteers from a particular community, which has a phone number that I'm sure will be made readily public to everybody in that community.

It will do an assessment of you when you need care, will assess once as opposed to now when you might see five different agencies, all of whom do an assessment to see if you fit their particular model and service they offer, an assessment which will identify what help you particularly need and which will then assign the coordination of that help to a placement coordinator who works within that multiservice agency.

That coordinator will have the responsibility for taking the assessment of what you need and matching that with the appropriate people to meet those needs. As I say, it may start from a very simple help with house-keeping or shopping and move on to quite intensive nursing or placement in an appropriate institution. I think that will be the first major change.

The second will come as a result of the expansion of the integrated homemaker all across the province. I recognize that in constituencies such as yours that cross municipal lines, as we plan and as the district health councils plan for the delivery of these services, we have to deal with those anomalies. But essentially, up to now you've only been eligible for homemaking if you were also getting some nursing or some physiotherapy. Under the integrated homemaker program, you can get that homemaker if that's all you need.

The expansion of the integrated homemaker will enable more people to get that service, and that's the program where the bulk of the funding is going and where I've been able to announce funding this year, and where, as we talk about expenditure control, we see a prime example of reallocation within that \$17-billion budget from perhaps some who've had the bulk of the funding in the past—the doctors—to those agencies that haven't had sufficient funding in the past—the homemakers and the home nursing component.

We will have both the locally based agencies, based on plans drawn up by district health councils and their long-term care committees, we will have the one-access and the placement coordination and we will have a more even provision of services across the province along that entire spectrum from home support to institutional care. This is something that, as a volunteer in the service agencies, I certainly expressed for the last 10 years the need for this kind of a coordinated, integrated approach.

We have moved as quickly as we could since becoming government to in fact finally put it in place all across the province, recognizing that how the program works and how it's delivered will vary from area to area. That's why the actual planning for both the number of multiservice area agencies and the number of services they provide and the geographic areas they cover is being done not with a cookie-cutter approach by the ministry saying what's good for the region of York is necessarily good for Thunder Bay or for Atikokan, but based on the planning that is being done with community consultation by the long-term care committees of the district health councils.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Two questions, one which might be easier to answer than the other. On page 21 of the briefing book, Mr Wessinger and I came across a point which we felt we just had to ask, therefore I'm going to ask it. What it says is, "In addition, administrative support is provided to the

Ontario Criminal Code Review Board, which operates under the authority of the Criminal Code of Canada." I'm wondering as to why.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Sharpe, fortunately, is still here. I'm sure can answer that question.

**Mr Sharpe:** Sorry, what was the question?

**Ms Haeck:** In the briefing book, it relates to the fact that the Ministry of Health is giving some administrative support to the Ontario Criminal Code Review Board relating to something under the authority of the Criminal Code of Canada, and I'm wondering why.

**Mr Sharpe:** That board used to be known as the Lieutenant Governor's Board of Review up until a year ago February.

**Ms Haeck:** Which says nothing more to me.

**Mr Sharpe:** It actually originated under the Mental Health Act many years ago and then was put under the Criminal Code. It deals with people who are found, it used to be, not guilty by reason of mental disorder, insanity and so on or unfit to stand trial, who have committed violent acts, end up in places like Penetang and St Thomas Psychiatric and so on.

The board historically, as I say, was under the Mental Health Act and was therefore supported as a Ministry of Health tribunal. In its evolution through various stages with the new mental disorder amendments to the Criminal Code about a year and a half ago, it became the Criminal Code Review Board. It used to be advisory to cabinet and the Lieutenant Governor, and now it makes decisions autonomously of cabinet, but the actual administration of the board has been left with the Ministry of Health.

The ministry, a dozen years ago, set up a support system: administrative staff, rented premises and so on. It had historically been chaired by a judge; it's not chaired that way now. The expenditures referred to would simply be related to those types of ongoing support requirements by the ministry. But it does function as an independent tribunal. The numbers you have there are primarily secretarial and admin staff supports and payment for members of the board and so on.

**The Chair:** Seeing that it is 6 of the clock, this committee stands adjourned to reconvene tomorrow, Wednesday, July 28, in room 151, where we have approximately five or better hours remaining to complete the estimates of the Ministry of Health.

The committee adjourned at 1757.









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Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Mahoney

Wessenger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Jamison

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Arnott

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ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

**Wednesday 28 July 1993**

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Mercredi 28 juillet 1993**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

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**Ministère de la Santé**

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 28 July 1993

The committee met at 1534 in room 151.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We've reconvened to continue the estimates of the Ministry of Health. We have approximately five hours and a bit remaining. Although our rotation will cause us to recognize the governing party in a moment, it's our custom to ask if the minister and/or her staff have any responses which they can share with us, either in print form or verbally, before we commence today's session.

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** I have answers to some of the questions, I think most of which came from Mrs Sullivan, which I can give you today, and then I'd be happy to give you the script so that the clerk can make copies for everyone.

Mrs Sullivan had asked about the regulations under the Consent to Treatment Act, the consultation on that and who might be involved in that consultation. I'm pleased to be able to tell her that once those regulations have been drafted, they will be distributed widely for consultation.

In addition to various associations, health practitioners and others, they will go to all of the colleges of regulated health professionals, all of the associations of health practitioners, the Ontario Nursing Home Association, the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, Justice for Children, Ontario Friends of Schizophrenics, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Patients' Rights Association, the Alzheimer Association of Ontario and Dying with Dignity.

Of course, for any other association or individual who might be interested, we'd be more than happy to add to that list. There will then be ongoing discussions with respect to the draft regulations themselves.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** Mr Chairman, on a point of order: If it will save the time of the committee, we're prepared to accept the written response rather than having it necessarily read into the record.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I had thought they might provoke supplementaries or that the committee would generally engage in—

**The Chair:** I had advised the minister that she briefly comment on the material while the clerk was preparing it. That was a point of assistance to the committee and it's duly noted. We will get that photocopied and distributed. Were there other items, Minister?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Yes. There was a question with respect to the Ontario Research and Development Council of Ontario: just to confirm that no decision has been made on the funds, but I have something here with respect to the nature of the review that's being undertaken.

The other one we have available is with respect to the elimination of the clinical clerkship stipends. The question had been about the status of that. We have some data with respect to the cost of that program and an indication that in April 1993 all of the hospitals, the faculties of medicine, the student organizations and stakeholders were informed about the change in the stipends. I need to make a change in one of these answers, and then when we get that done, I can give them to the clerk for copying.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister and staff. That was helpful. Perhaps I then might move to Ms Haeck.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** I know the minister is somewhat aware of my comments because of issues that we've raised in our own caucus meetings, which obviously are confidential, but she knows my views on these issues. I find it enlightening that some of these views are shared beyond myself with members within the opposition parties. Mr Conway and Mr Runciman actually made reference to them last evening.

I guess for me personally I found it an illuminating exercise, the process of going through the regulated health professions hearings, because we had so many different health practitioners come before us and talk about their specialties, making it very clear how they all fit together in servicing our constituents and obviously ourselves.

Mr Runciman last night or during yesterday's debate made mention of what he called a physician's assistant. I know Mr Conway and others, even within our own caucus, people like Dr Bob Frankford, have long advocated nurse practitioners, addressing whether it's underserved areas or just generally assisting in offices. I am personally concerned, because I think Niagara really does many times qualify as an underserved area.

I'm just wondering what headway we're making in looking at alternative ways of delivery. It's not just doctors or nurses, but I'm also looking at the case of, say, speech-language pathologists. We have a real shortage of those in the province.

Have we been negotiating with the colleges and the profession to see how those fields can be opened up in



a way that those deliveries can be achieved? I know in Niagara we need speech-language pathologists. We need physiotherapists. I'm quite sure that's true not only for the doctor side of the equation, but for a range of other specialties as well.

1540

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Yes. I think the member raises two issues in that question. One is the whole issue of underserved areas and how we try to provide the appropriate resources to deal with areas of the province where, quite frankly, the fee-for-service free market system has not worked in attracting physicians to those areas. The other question the member touches on was one on which we had an interesting debate in the Legislature last night around Bill 50, where the member for Leeds-Grenville talked at some length about physician's assistants.

Let me deal with that one in the context of other professionals first, because in my response to Mr Runciman's comments last night, I indicated my broad support for nurse practitioners as a professional within the health system that I believe is underutilized. Mr Runciman corrected me and said that physician's assistants had a much broader scope of practice than did nurse practitioners and that they were not one and the same. So I stand corrected on that.

On the general issue of the more appropriate use of other professionals within the system, I see the Regulated Health Professions Act as being a critical component of enabling us to both make more appropriate use of the skills, the talents, the experience of other professionals as they become self-regulating professions, and also to try to get broad support for the fact that there are many health problems where the doctor is not necessarily the only game in town, or even the most appropriate one.

I always make much of the fact that as the client of a community health centre myself for many years, and as somebody who is at this point healthy—touch wood—when I need to make an appointment, I seek an appointment with a nurse practitioner. Should the nurse practitioner find there is anything that needs to be done, she then refers me to the doctor. That's an entirely appropriate use of a hierarchy of professionals that may well lead both to doctors having more time to concentrate on serious illnesses and also a better use within the financial structure by the professionals. So I see that happening. I see it happening through the RHPA. I see it happening through the expansion of alternative payments plans, of which community health centres are one, where the whole philosophy is that you work as a team and your remuneration is based not on how many people you see in a day, but how you work to meet the needs of those people who are there. I see that as beginning to happen.

With respect to underserved areas, as the member

knows, governments for decades have been struggling with that. I think the work we have initiated as part of the joint management committee with the OMA, and through that the creation of the task force headed by Dr John Evans and the subgroup of that headed by Dean McMurtry from Western, is going to, I hope, give us some help not just in a quick fix or a monetary solution to the problem, but in looking at the structures and making some fundamental changes.

I have confidence in that because the people who've been looking at the issue under the auspices of those committees have for the first time been more than the ministry and the OMA. The district health councils, the academic health science centres, the interns and residents themselves have been brought into the discussion.

Doing that, and at the same time putting more emphasis on district health councils to do the health care planning in a region will, I think, lead to solutions that are more than merely counting the number of doctors and then identifying whether there are too many or too few, but may in fact begin to identify what does this area, this district, this community actually need to meet their specific health care requirements? How then do we get those professionals into our community? How do we provide those professionals with the backup, the resources and assistance that will make them feel comfortable in that kind of a practice and stay there?

**Ms Haec:** I must admit that I think Niagara's health council has actually done a commendable job in most areas that it's addressed. I have to say that when I moved to St Catharines in 1977, fairly shortly thereafter the district health council, along with the hospitals, managed to put parochial wars aside and do an awful lot of coordination locally of a range of services. So the Hotel Dieu is no longer doing obstetrics, it's actually being done at the St Catharines General, and life support is being handled in various hospitals, but it's been very strategic. In the case of the Hotel Dieu, it's doing cancer, dialysis and a number of other things.

The kinds of discussions, and they are sometimes very heated and sometimes even—to use a pun, but it's not meant in any nasty way—a bloody war between hospitals is not exactly what one likes to see, but one is aware that they do exist. Our local health council has actually done, I think, a commendable job in making sure that we are doing a number of things, and I think we've done them well for some time. But the issue of the underserved areas still somehow eludes them, as it has eluded other people.

I want to address an issue that is close to my heart, partly because the St Catharines General Hospital is within about a block of my office and the psychiatric wing is part of that hospital. We see a number of ex-psychiatric patients who are clients, as well as seeing them on the street.

Around some of the mental health strategies that are

coming forward, I'm wondering how we're going to be able to deal with some these folks a little more readily. I understand that this is all jelling at this present time, but I know there is a great need in all our communities, and I would appreciate your comments, because I know there is that need.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm glad to have some discussion about that, because I know it's certainly a priority, and we mentioned it briefly on the first day. As members will know, we've released our mental health reform paper, and I may ask Jessica Hill from the ministry to speak in more detail.

Let me just say that I think what we have begun to do for the first time is to create a framework so that everybody knows what the ministry's approach is. That approach is that we have to deal first with the most severely mentally ill, that we have to look at the whole spectrum of services and that we have to set ourselves some definite targets with respect to number of beds per population and some time lines at which we can reach those targets.

To repeat my own very personal commitment, having lived through the closure of a psychiatric hospital in my neighbourhood without a buildup of community-based services being in place to deal with that, before there is any dramatic shift or closure, we have to work on developing the community-based services. But Ms Hill is here, and perhaps if I could ask her to come forward and identify herself, she might be able to expand on the mental health strategy and give you some sense as to where the general hospitals and their role fit in the planning that's now happening and to the framework.

**The Chair:** Ms Hill, please identify your position with the ministry and proceed.

**Ms Jessica Hill:** I'm Jessica Hill. I'm the director of the community mental health branch. Can you phrase the question in terms of the hospital issue for me?

**Ms Haack:** We are seeing, let's say, the number of psychiatrists working in hospitals decrease. There's definitely a regular threat of fewer psychiatrists working within the hospital environment. I know there are a number in private practice, but they are not necessarily working in the hospital setting.

The number of follow-up programs that are available locally really don't tend to meet the needs of someone, at least from the user's point of view, when he's left either Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital or Hamilton General Hospital. There are a range of services that they really could make use of, but they're not necessarily available locally. Anything that you can provide from your experience that does work in a community like St Catharines, which has a population of 130,000, would be appreciated.

**Ms Hill:** Okay. I think there are several aspects to your question. The first is that we have identified what

we're calling key services that need to be available in the community that make a difference in terms of providing essential supports to those living with a severe mental illness. Those are case management services, housing support services—housing itself and support services to housing—crisis intervention and support to consumer survivors through self-help and economic development, as well as support to families.

**1550**

We've identified these largely from looking at other jurisdictions that have implemented mental health reform, and the theory essentially is that you turn off the tap of admissions to the provincial psychiatric hospitals through the provision of these key services in the community. Now, to do that, given that we're in an environment of reallocation, we're going to be working through a planning process with district health councils, the provincial psychiatric hospital in your region, for instance, the general hospitals in your region and the community mental health agencies that exist, to look at ways in which these services can be further developed. Often there is a little bit of one service or one well-developed service but you don't have the full configuration.

All the provincial psychiatric hospitals have undertaken strategic planning and have been in a process of moving programs into the community. What the framework does is it provides a focus for where the services need to move and, through a planning process, both the programs will be enhanced and the workers will move from the provincial psychiatric hospitals into providing more community service, which has already started.

**Ms Haack:** I know Mr Wessinger has got a couple of questions, but I just want one follow-up question, if I may. Hamilton Psychiatric: We basically fall into its catchment area, and I understand we make up about 30% of its workload and yet we get about 11% back.

**Ms Hill:** Right.

**Ms Haack:** One of the concerns has been that if you live close to the hospital, basically you're going to get the service, and if you live, as my constituents do, at least 45 miles—I'm sorry, I don't know what it is in kilometres—away from that hospital, you're just not getting the same sort of follow-up programs. Are those actual programs going to be housed in St Catharines as opposed to someone occasionally coming from HPH?

**Ms Hill:** Yes. The answer is that there would be actual programs moving into the region. I think there are a number of planning challenges. One is that we hope to move to a point where the provincial psychiatric hospital catchment areas are better aligned with district health council regions, and there are six planning regions. The whole period of reform is 10 years, so we don't expect these things to be accomplished in the short run.



However, I think the provincial psychiatric hospitals recognize themselves that historically what has happened is that the buildup of programs has been in the centre, where the hospital is, and that the challenge now is to move the programs much further into their own catchment areas, and that has been done. Brockville has a program in Ottawa, for instance, and we'd like to see more of that development take place, based on the local planning needs.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me just add to that. Thank you, Ms Hill. The provincial psychiatric hospitals have all, over the last year, year and a half, done strategic plans for their own futures and so have the district health councils. A first step in implementation of mental health reform has been a request that those plans be integrated based on the regions within the Ministry of Health.

In everything you do, you get into, what's the catchment area? Is it the district health council area? Is it the regional municipality? Is it the catchment area of a psychiatric hospital? The decision was made that it be the six Ministry of Health planning areas where the mental health planning would be done, as opposed to long-term care, which is on the district health council basis. The integration of those plans, I see, will begin to identify precisely the kinds of gaps that you've mentioned, whereby the services may be clustered around the institution and the rest of the catchment area left fairly empty.

**The Chair:** Mrs Sullivan, please.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Before I begin, I'd like to have Mr Morin present a question.

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** Minister, I have a question on Bill 44. It's a bill that I introduced in June and it's An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act. I wished to debate that bill tomorrow, but for other reasons it was postponed. I hope to have the opportunity to debate it some time in September.

Bill 44 recommends a new health card, complete with photo and expiry date. It would also contain the cardholder's sex and date of birth. This bill specifically addresses the concerns that were raised by the Provincial Auditor. Its aim is to provide the ministry with accurate registration information and to weed out ineligible cardholders. The expiry date and proposed four-year cycle would assist the ministry by providing regular updates of information.

Mr Decter recognized before the public accounts committee last February that the highest inaccuracy in the database is on addresses, and that is a real problem. Mr Peter Burgess also referred to the need to clean up the existing address data.

It is clear that the health card I propose would greatly contribute to the control of fraud and misuse of the OHIP system. By requiring registration on a regular basis, it toughens the process leading to the issuance of

a health card. You will agree that we need more rigorous identification guidelines, not to exclude the citizens entitled to health care in this province but to make it more difficult to defraud or misuse our health care system. The whole process of providing a photograph and proof of identity is part of the solution.

I have heard that the officials in your ministry support Bill 44 in its intent and thrust. I met with the OMA. I met with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. By the way, it's the first time ever that they have come out publicly and supported a bill. I also have the full cooperation of the Ontario Hospital Association. I have written to all of them and the responses are coming in every day supporting the bill.

So will you also express your support for this legislation, for its objectives, and are you prepared to implement Bill 44 as a measure to control misuse, cut losses in the long term and improve the administration of the OHIP system? If you do not support Bill 44, what do you intend to do instead?

I must point out I had a lot of experience with another bill, which is still waiting in third reading, and God knows how long it will take before it proceeds.

**The Chair:** We'll raise that during the appropriate estimates. Thank you, Mr Morin.

**Mr Morin:** Yes, I know. I'm just saying that a bill is never perfect, but the intent is to make sure that we present it and that we fine-tune it afterwards and that debates take place. That's where the real action takes place. My bill is not perfect. Nothing is ever perfect, and you know that. So where do you stand? What do you plan to do? Do you agree with my bill? Can I count on your support?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Well, let me start, and I think there are some officials here from the ministry. I don't know whether there's anyone here from OHIP today, but I know Ms Malcolmson is here, who might be able to comment on it as well.

I don't need any convincing that we have to look at the existing health card, but I'm sure that Mr Morin, as a member of the government that brought in the current card, will recognize that to bring in such a system is difficult, not cheap, and complex. The decisions that were made three and a half years ago to bring in a very simple card—I mean, people were asked their name, age, address and citizenship and that's all—were based on the fact that they didn't want to exclude anybody.

1600

I think now we recognize that we have to have a much more rigorous identification process before a card is issued and we have to make the card more secure. A decision was made that this was the most cost-effective card to bring in, and I think it was perhaps a case of being penny wise and pound foolish and it's now time to look at what form we could do.



I certainly support the intent of Bill 44 and I have already asked the ministry to develop some comprehensive proposals that I can review and that cabinet wishes to review with respect to health cards and to identify those areas where in fact legislative support is required in order to establish a new card. Many of the ideas in your legislation are indeed under consideration by the ministry.

Our support for your bill categorically today gives me some difficulty and I'm not prepared to say, "Yes, I support your bill." I appreciate very much the fact that you understand that as a bill goes through there's room for changes. The primary difficulty that ministry officials have identified with Bill 44 is the lack of flexibility, the fact that you're putting into legislation things like dates by which the card has got to be issued and the fact that people have to sign when they receive the card.

We believe it might be much better to do it as a credit card: you sign your card so that there's a signature on the card that can be matched with another piece of identification. But I think those are administrative details that we would need to work out, where perhaps they might more appropriately be placed in regulations as opposed to being put in legislation.

There are also a number of things that we think we might want to look at on the card such as a date, or an expiry date, which your legislation doesn't provide for. I make that point that if we in fact describe in legislation the nature of the card and we find that there is something that we ought to then add to the card like the version codes that we've now brought in on the existing card, it would require a change in legislation to do that and I'm not sure that's the best approach to take.

There are a number of operational details that we should look at and with new technology, which is changing all the time, I want to be sure that if we are going to change the card, we put in place a card that will last longer than the three years it has taken to prove that the card your government brought in isn't in fact the right one to do the job because it's going to be very expensive.

I guess one further difficulty with your legislation is that it prescribes a specific date on which new cards have to be issued, and I think probably what would have to happen, if you are going to do a changeover, is a gradual changeover, that perhaps you identified that as new cards were issued you began with the new card or then you did it with all seniors. But to have sort of a moment in time when a current card no longer operated and a new one would only be accepted would be an administratively very difficult thing to do as well as perhaps making even greater risk that some people might find on a particular day they didn't have the card.

**Mr Morin:** What you're saying, of course, is—you're confirming what I've just said—no bill is ever

perfect. My concern is that we have a population in Ontario of 10 million people, we have 10.5 million cards floating around. I'm told that for every 700 cards, it costs the government over \$1 million. Divided by 500,000, you come to a figure which is astronomical.

I believe that in the context of today it's not a question of blaming who has done whatever was done. Ms Lankin herself said that had she been in that same position she would have accepted the system. The important thing is that we're facing a problem right now, we cannot delay. Sure it's going to be costly, everything is costly, but at the same time if we invest an amount of \$70 million to \$80 million in order to save \$1 billion, I think it's a very good investment.

All you have to do on a bill such as the one I'm introducing is to add a regulation to it, as simple as that, but to bring it forward and discuss it. I wish I could discuss it further, but I don't want to intrude on the time of my colleague.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think it's a really important issue because I know that the public accounts committee has been dealing with it and it was one that was raised by your colleague in opening remarks to this committee, and if we're talking about the expenditures of the Ministry of Health, it's critical that we look at that passport to that system, that we all are very concerned about if it's being misused.

I didn't work out what the formula for misuse that you identified would produce, but I certainly accept the estimates by the ministry that we're looking at about a \$20-million expenditure that is inappropriate. That is far too much, but I think we have to recognize that if we took your bill and said from a certain day we would do it today, we would then be spending double or triple that on a certain day.

The other difficulty I have with passing the legislation first and then designing the card is that we may come up with a system that requires additional legislation. When the bill comes forward for second reading is of course up to you and the private members' rotation, but I think it would be preferable for the work to continue on the nature of the card and how we can best protect the system and assure the people of the province, who pay \$17 billion through their tax dollars, that the only people taking advantage of that system through the insurance scheme are the people who are entitled to it.

The best way to go is to do our research, identify the most appropriate kind of card, discuss with the stakeholders what is easy for the professions and the hospitals to work with and how we can provide the backup to that, and then, if legislation is required to enable us to put that card in place or to add security to that card, to design the legislation that ensures we have the appropriate safeguards on the card that comes in.

But I hope we can have second reading of your bill as soon as you can get the time in private members' hour and give us an opportunity—

**Mr Morin:** As long as it doesn't end up in committee of the whole; that's my concern. If it goes before a committee, I'm agreeable to that.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'd like to move on to an area which also relates to some of the information technology and introduction of new services, and that is the drug network. The first question I have is, was the contract for some \$21 million with respect to a drug network tendered or was it awarded on the basis of a request for proposal?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't think there's anybody here today from the drug reform secretariat. I regret that. I can answer fairly generally, or I can ask Mrs Mottershead to, or you might wish to stand it down and I can see if somebody can—

**Mrs Sullivan:** A written response is fine, because I have a number of other questions on that area.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps we can answer so everybody in the committee is aware of its status at this point.

**Mrs Margaret Mottershead:** An RFP was issued for that system, and the proposals were all evaluated and the best bid, according to the criteria, a number of criteria used, has been—

**Mrs Sullivan:** How many proposals did you receive?

**Mrs Mottershead:** I believe there were about four. Patricia Malcolmson was on the committee that actually reviewed some of the bids.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps I can ask Ms Malcolmson to come forward, and we could answer the question. I'm sorry, Patricia, I didn't realize your expertise extends to this one too.

**The Chair:** Welcome, Ms Malcolmson. Please introduce yourself, with your title.

**Ms Patricia Malcolmson:** I'm Patricia Malcolmson. I'm the assistant deputy minister of corporate management and support, and I've been a member of the steering committee on the drug process.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Could you perhaps describe the process for us?

**Ms Malcolmson:** The process was a fairly complex and I think a very well-balanced one, whereby a significant range of criteria was developed to assess the proposals. We had, first of all, a call for an RFI, a request for information, which resulted in, I'm not sure, seven or eight replies from companies or consortia who thought they could in fact address the issues we were looking at. We had a process to evaluate those to see if they basically came up to the mark in terms of a broad capacity to achieve the objectives of the project, so we

did not ask for very detailed financial responses, but we did ask for a capacity in terms of the members of the consortia to support a project of this size.

We then sifted through those responses and issued a formal request for proposal and there were four responses to that request. We finally selected one. The process that was used was quite a detailed and formal one which actually used a fairly complicated statistical weighting system in order to evaluate those requests as they came in. There was unanimity in the end about the winner of that proposal, and it was also the lowest bid. We are at this point fairly far into the implementation of the network and are expecting the core of the network to be implemented in the early autumn.

#### 1610

**Mrs Sullivan:** I know the work Greenshields has done in the federal project for the Department of Veterans Affairs, in a pilot that was undertaken. I'm interested that much of the work they did as a background on that project will probably be utilized, or much of their experience will be utilized, in this one.

There are other areas of concern I have, though, about the process with respect to the setup of the network. They relate to the involvement of those organizations and individuals that will be required, it appears, to use the network, one of those being the pharmacists' association—I mentioned this in my introductory remarks—and the other being the physicians' association, which we're told in background documentation will be linked to pharmacists through the system.

I have information from the OMA that—I'd just like to read a paragraph of this letter. This may not be this system; it may be the fault of the drafter of the news release, but I think something should be cleared up here. The OMA writes:

"The news release clearly implies that doctors will be on the network and therefore will be better able to communicate with pharmacists. Doctors will not be on this network. Repeated inquiries to both you"—this letter was written to the minister—"and your staff have revealed only the most vague plans. We have received no commitment that doctors will either be consulted in the development of this network or included in its final program. It is unconscionable for the ministry to continue to refer to inappropriate prescribing when your government has refused to include doctors in your plans to provide a major new information network."

That's one complaint. The second complaint of course is one I placed in the introduction to the consideration of the estimates: that the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, which is the bargaining agent for every pharmacist in the province, was not consulted in the design. While a pharmacist is represented on the secretariat, the OPA is not. The OPA is the body that considers a number of issues, not the least of which is



the kind of linkups and proposals for linkups that it has suggested over a period of years, but as well assesses on behalf of the individual pharmacists the liability of members of the association with respect to the utilization of the system. I think that is singularly problematic.

In the meantime, the ministry has issued to the pharmacists a proposed contract which clearly means that those pharmacists who are not signed up on the network will no longer be participants in the drug benefit program. That was certainly not a part of their analysis originally, and they have not been able to contribute in terms of the design and the requirements with respect to that program.

The last hinge on this, as it were, is that I understand the results of the smart card pilot are available; indeed, for a number of reasons, the smart card project indicated that a smart card probably will not work as an information linkage in the health care system. While this program doesn't go as far as a smart card, it is a step that does integrate information from one provider to another, and with OHIP.

Having put those issues on the table, which go beyond the questions of the tender and so on, and I think you have probably a good provider here, how do you respond to the other issues with respect to the network being designed without an appropriate consultative framework and at some jeopardy, in the end, to the expectations for the system and the value of it?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say that I certainly will find out, and we will get, before the end of the afternoon, if Ms Malcolmson can't do it, the consultation that went on, but it is certainly my understanding that there was consultation. As I say so often, we do more consultation than one can believe, so I'd be very surprised if there weren't.

With respect to the OMA and its position on this, I have made it very clear from the beginning, and certainly in my questions when I was first told about this network shortly after becoming Minister of Health, that the network had the capacity at some future time to allow doctors to be part of the network. But I certainly was quite aware and never intimated in the unveiling of the network, and neither did the representatives of the company who are going to put it on line, that it was the intent initially to link with doctors' offices. In fact, the first stage has always been clearly identified as pharmacist linking.

On the question of those pharmacists who are not now able to link and are part of the ODB, again Ms Malcolmson may have some details, but it's certainly my understanding that there are relatively few pharmacists who don't have some electronic capacity. And yes, as 40% of their business comes from the Ontario drug benefit plan, I think, as the purchaser of that service, when we set up this kind of system, to say to the people

who wish to have agreements with us to supply under that system, "We want you to be linked up so we can make the system more effective," is a reasonable expectation of the customer, ie, the ministry.

I don't know how many of them, as I say, are unable to link in as soon as the program is up and running, but perhaps Ms Malcolmson can add to my comments.

**Ms Malcolmson:** I don't have information exactly on how many pharmacists are indeed automated, but I believe the majority of them are. I also know there is a fairly detailed plan in place on the part of the project team to assist pharmacists in becoming linked to the network, and at this point in time we expect that network linkage to occur as planned by the early autumn.

I could only reiterate the minister's comments that it was not the intention of the project to include at the first level a linkage to providers' offices. I think it's part of the broader conceptual framework that, yes indeed, in the longer term it will be desirable to link prescribers as well as dispensers to the ministry. That, in the longer term, is the best way to do things, but this particular project is, at its first stage, confined to pharmacists.

You also, I think, addressed the issue of smart cards. I don't think smart cards are directly relevant, at this point, to the project. We have completed a smart card pilot in northern Ontario, as probably most members of this committee recognize. The government has not formally evaluated or assessed that particular report. However, we do have, based on internal evidence, two levels of evaluation of the project as it was undertaken. One was an independent evaluation by an Ottawa firm, Curry Adams, on the actual smart card pilot itself, and the other one of course is the internal one by the project team. I could perhaps give you some general information on that if you wish to have a little more information there.

1620

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think the interest in the smart card project was clearly a linkup to the OHIP cards. What I understand were some of the findings of the smart card project were that in fact getting the information into the system was the stumbling block, rather than utilization of the information after. Over a period of a long time, as we've identified a problem with, say, overdrugging of seniors and so on, some of which could be identified through that kind a system and some of which will be identified through the network, the information linkup, which is the key—I was very interested to see that the plugging in of the information was the bottleneck, rather than issues associated with privacy, which have now become issues more of ensuring that care is taken with the information rather than the privacy issue itself.

As we look, by example, at a change of a card system that becomes both an identification tool, an information



tool and a billing tool, and we see the minister considering methods of changing the cards, this drug network becomes, I think, in the scheme of things in the ministry, more and more important. That's one of the reasons I am very concerned that background documentation—and indeed I have a piece of documentation that went to pharmacists as a draft that included a draft contract. It says right here, "The Ontario drug programs health network is a province-wide computer system that will link the Ministry of Health with Ontario pharmacists, dispensing physicians, dispensing nursing homes and hospital dispensaries."

If that's not the case, then the information should not have been sent, whether it came from the Ministry of Health or whether it came from the company that was contracted for the services, because it's created a lot of ill will. This is where many of the issues that I raised the other day, where I indicated my concern with respect to the consultative process and the information delivery process, are again underlined, because you've had a formal letter of protest from two organizations, both of which have to be on board in association with this network.

I don't know if I can get another question in now or not, but I did want to get this issue on the table.

**The Chair:** If the minister would like to give a brief response to that, then I'd like to move to Mr Wilson.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say that I regret if the impression that has been left was that it was immediately going to move to others than pharmacists, but as I said initially, I think it's very important that we have the capacity to do that, and certainly over time I would like to see us move in that direction. But we have not made any final decisions on that and I can't give anybody a time line as to when it will occur.

But the downside also of saying that this is only going to be for pharmacists is that if then you are able to expand to physicians and hospitals and nursing homes, they say, "You should have told us when you did it that in fact this was where you were going." I think it's very clear that the long-range objective would be to have everybody linked by the network, and the timing and the pace at which we can do that remains to be seen.

I notice some other representatives. Mary Catherine Lindberg, who's the ADM in charge of the Ontario drug reform secretariat, has joined us, so if Mrs Sullivan had felt there were any more specifics that she needed, we could expand on that.

**The Chair:** That will occur in her rotation. It's noted that the staff member is present.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We asked them to come over after Mrs Sullivan's question.

**The Chair:** I know, and we still have until 6 o'clock.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** In April 1992, your

government announced that it would finally honour a \$108-million commitment made by the Liberal government in 1987 to redevelop hospitals in Simcoe county. That's the General and Marine Hospital in Collingwood, Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston, or what's now called New Tecumseth, Soldiers' Memorial in Orillia and the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie.

As you know, this announcement has been recycled on three occasions by at least two different governments over the past six years, and while there's been no shortage of announcements, we've still yet to turn the sod—although I will note that Elinor Caplan at one point did go up and turn the sod twice at RVH.

**Mrs Sullivan:** It was heavy soil.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** They did have two elections in five years.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Yes. The gist of the question, of course, is, will we see the construction on these projects begin this fiscal year?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I certainly hope so, and I can assure you that so does my colleague and parliamentary assistant. I was warned when I visited Barrie that I wasn't even to think of turning the sod until it was going to be followed by bulldozers, bricklayers and construction. I know the assistant deputy minister is much more familiar with the details and the timing of this at this point, and I'll let Mrs Mottershead respond.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I actually think the members present in this room have probably the latest and most up-to-date information on this. Certainly, the intent is there. I think it has been communicated. I think it has been in the papers, and the district health council is really pushing to get the final pieces sorted out. There's one or two issues related to functional programs that we have had discussions on, and staff have been going up on a very frequent basis to try and expedite.

There is a letter that has been made available to say that we have explicit commitment to move as quickly as possible on this. That's been made public. We are certainly working very hard to do that.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate the response, but I hope, and I'm sure you do, you understand the frustration. We have Hansards from last year where essentially the same thing was said, and bureaucrats recently went up and told them to redo their functional plans. I went over, with the administrators, some of the stuff the ministry was asking for, and it was pretty trivial. I'll say that publicly. It certainly left the impression with myself, administrators, fund-raising chairs, mayors and reeves, that the government's simply dragging its feet on this because it doesn't want to flow the dollars.

What is the holdup? What you asked for in the redevelopment of those functional plans was trivial. Some of the stuff that was asked for could have been done by conference call. In fact, at the end of the

meeting with administrators, they were very discouraged and felt that they're being asked to spin their wheels. You understand that the problem also is that there's been a great deal of money committed by those communities, a tremendous amount of money, for some relatively small communities like Collingwood and Alliston. Those fund-raising commitments are based on the premise that you'll move ahead this year with construction.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Before Mrs Mottershead gives the details, let me just say categorically to the member and to Mr Wessenger that there is no intent by the ministry to make this take any longer than it needs to. The direction has been very clear that this is something we want to see proceed. We want to see it proceed as quickly as we can. Having said that, there are always in such projects and ones of this magnitude details that need to be ironed out. I don't fault staff for making sure that the documentation, the planning, the functional plans and all of that are done correctly.

My last understanding, and I think I talked about this as recently as the end of last week, was that there had been a meeting, that there were some additional changes that were required, but that it was in fact proceeding. I have no reason to believe that the end of the year is not a target we can meet.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I want to clarify in terms of ministry and minister. It has been staff that has been working on this in terms of the functional program, and the minister's commitment and the government's commitment have been consistent in terms of moving ahead as quickly as possible.

We've had some concerns directly related to the operating cost as a result of some of that functional program design. As you know, in the kind of world we're all living in right now with zero increases, it's really impossible to make those kinds of accommodations.

I will certainly commit to follow up and review the outcome of the June 16 meeting of staff to see whether or not there were trivial suggestions made or whether they were substantive. I can commit that we are going to be moving very quickly on this. I want to make sure my staff isn't—

1630

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I guess the definition of "trivial" depends on what side of the fence you're sitting on with respect to this issue. You know that the faith those communities hold in governments is not too great these days, and that's part of the problem, because of previous commitments that were made and broken.

A specific date would be very helpful, or some sort of written response back to me narrowing down when we might be able to start construction, because some of the stuff that was asked for, I say with respect, I fail to

see, as did experts in the field, why we couldn't go ahead with breaking ground while some of the fine-tuning and functional programs go ahead, because you've pretty well made it clear what the objective and the operating cost side is. Most of the stuff that I asked for didn't have any effect on the actual buildings, because you've already downsized all of those communities, and you can't downsize any more unless you're intending to not build hospitals at all. So I'd like your comments on that, and I would like a written response back also.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I believe we can oblige the member with a written response in the next couple of days. I just want to let people know that in the first iteration and looking at the architectural drawings, using the Royal Vic as an example, with ministry going over and over the design program, we were actually able to get a compromise in some of the structural design work that had been done, both from the architects the hospital engaged and between our architects in the ministry, which saved \$10 million to \$12 million. Some of the work that the ministry is engaged in, in terms of advising and reviewing these things, does actually produce efficiencies to the taxpayer's benefit. So I will follow up, and you will get a letter.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd be happy, as part of that follow-up, to see if it would be possible to commit to some kind of a timetable, because I know only too well that when hospital boards and communities have engaged in fund-raising and communities have made a contribution—I was in the Woodstock community, hearing the same thing just last week, where the money there has been in escrow for a number of years. There was a six-year fund-raising campaign that's come to an end, and there's another fund-raising campaign for an arena going on. People are saying: "We gave to the hospital. We haven't seen that built yet. We're not going to give to the arena until we see that in fact what we gave to the hospital results in a building."

I am, as a volunteer, very conscious of that and certainly wouldn't want to do anything to inhibit community contributions. So we will see if we can be more specific in my next response. I know I did send a fairly general response back to the chair of the board just last week, I think.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Minister, and I want to thank Mrs Mottershead also for her response. I look forward to the written response.

Minister, I want to turn to a topic that was brought to my attention by Mr Peter Campbell, who's president and chief operating officer for Connaught Laboratories. Last month, he expressed his concern to me regarding the Ministry of Health's decision to award its 1993 influenza vaccine contract to a Quebec-based firm. I feel it's important that several facts be put on the record here regarding the awarding of this vaccine tender to



IAF Biovac of Quebec.

The background is that Connaught employs 750 highly skilled people, including 150 scientists. They have an annual payroll of \$35 million, which resulted in \$9 million in employee-paid taxes in 1992 alone. They returned 14.5% of their profits to Ontario as corporate tax revenue and invest 15% of every dollar into research. Connaught did revise its offer on the vaccine to provide the Ministry of Health with \$270,000 in savings. I hope you have a ministry official here who's familiar with the wording of that.

IAF Biovac is a company that is subsidized by the Quebec government, both in terms of funding and annual vaccine purchase guarantees. I really have three questions for your consideration. What consideration did your ministry give to Connaught's value added component when you made your decision to award this tender to a Quebec firm? Are you reviewing your ministry's purchasing policy that will recognize the contributions being made by Ontario firms? Does the ministry require 300,000 doses of subvirion (split) influenza vaccine, and if so, will this portion of the influenza vaccine requirement be awarded to Connaught?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I certainly know that questions from Connaught Laboratories have been asked, and I have been made aware of them. Dr Richard Schabas, who is the provincial medical officer of health, is here, and I think he's the one who could perhaps answer it in the kind of detail that the member wishes.

**The Chair:** Please proceed. You've been introduced.

**Dr Richard Schabas:** I've been introduced, and very nicely too. Thank you. I can answer some of your questions; I'm not sure I can answer all of them at the moment.

The process for purchasing influenza vaccine for the last number of years, as with some other vaccines, has been through a national tender process which we enter into with most of the other provinces and which is administered by Health and Welfare Canada. As a result of that national tendering process, which obviously allows for a much greater volume of vaccine purchase, we have achieved substantially lower prices for these vaccines, particularly for influenza vaccine, where I'm very pleased to be able to tell you that our vaccination costs have come down substantially. In fact, we've been able to greatly increase the volume of influenza vaccine, which has gone up by about 25%, that we've distributed for the elderly and other high-risk groups in the province at essentially no increase in cost because we've achieved these lower costs.

The tendering process is a competitive one. In effect, over the last few years there have been two competitors. In most previous years Connaught Laboratories has come in with the low bid and has won our contract. This year, Institut Armand Frappier, or Institut Biovac,

which is the company in question, came in with a bid with its wholesale vaccine which was substantially lower than the Connaught bid, resulting in a savings for our vaccine purchase in the area of about \$600,000.

I should point out that the vaccine which Armand Frappier produces is in fact manufactured in Canada, manufactured in Montreal. It has some Ontario content: Influenza vaccine is made in chicken eggs, and the chicken eggs are actually purchased in eastern Ontario, so we do have some economic interest in that. Connaught Laboratories produces its influenza vaccine in Swiftwater, Pennsylvania, and it really has no Canadian content. Whereas in other areas we have shown a preference for Ontario-produced vaccines, we didn't regard that as an issue in this case and went, as we have done in previous years, with the low bid, and in the process saved the Ontario taxpayers a great deal of money.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate your response, doctor. I'm sure the eastern Ontario egg producers are quite happy.

**Dr Schabas:** In fact, we've received letters from that group that I'd be happy to share with you.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** It's interesting to point that out, but knowing the price of eggs these days, it's a very small component in the price of vaccine. It's none the less an Ontario component, I suppose.

The third question was, Connaught understands that the ministry will be maintaining a requirement of 300,000 doses of subvirion (split) influenza vaccine this year. Are they in the running to receive any of that contract?

**Dr Schabas:** I can't answer that question off the cuff. I would have to check and confirm that. I'm not sure where we are with the purchase. That is a part of the national tender. We will be purchasing smaller quantities of the split virus vaccine because there are certain groups which require that as opposed to the wholesale product. I could certainly get you a response for that.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I'd appreciate a written response to that, if that's possible, Mr Chair.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me just say before we leave that subject that certainly we have been doing some work and we now have within the ministry a health economic development branch, which I think I mentioned yesterday when we were talking. They have been looking at whether it is possible to develop criteria that evaluate the value added economic benefit. It's not that easy, depending on what assumptions you make and what factors you add, and one does have to look at, where do you get the cheapest products that will do the job that you want to? As we look at interprovincial trade and other considerations, I'm not sure we will come to an answer that will make every company in



Ontario happy, but we are examining that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. Do you have further questions, Mr Wilson?

1640

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Very quickly, Minister, I think you might be familiar with a relatively new drug that's called Mycobutin. It's used to prevent microbacterium avarium complex, or MAC, which is a secondary opportunistic infection in patients with advanced HIV or AIDS. That drug, as I understand, is currently being reviewed by the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee, the DQTC. I wanted to know if you could tell me or find out for me what the status is of that particular drug. It's my understanding also that the drug has been on the market in Canada since March; I think the feds approved it in March. There are a number of people in the AIDS community who want that particular drug approved, and they're asking me why there's a holdup. I was wondering if you could check into that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Do you want to discuss that one first or have you another similar one?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Sure.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mary Catherine Lindberg, who is here from the drug programs reform secretariat, can speak to that. My understanding is that it is still under consideration by the DQTC, but if Mary Catherine would like to come forward, perhaps she can speak in some detail about what the drug is, what it achieves and how much it costs.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I don't need some detail; I need a quick response, please.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** But you need to identify yourself first.

**Ms Mary Catherine Lindberg:** The DQTC is still reviewing it. The submission that was put forward by the company was not complete, so we had to go back and get some additional information. But even if the DQTC decides that it should be paid for, it will only be available to those AIDS patients who are on ODB, and that doesn't answer the concerns we have about whether that will be available to the AIDS patients through a wider program, and we're addressing that as part of the reform.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Can I just ask, currently physicians are accessing the drug through section 8s?

**Ms Lindberg:** Yes, for ODB patients.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** How frequent is that?

**Ms Lindberg:** I'm signing a lot of them, so there's nobody being turned down at the present time when they have a good justification on a section 8.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** So your intention is to put it on the ODB, not in the catastrophic drug program?

**Ms Lindberg:** Probably not, no. Septra still is the drug of choice at this point. This is an additional drug,

but Septra, which is a lot cheaper, is still the drug of choice.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Do I have a commitment that it will go on the ODB?

**Ms Lindberg:** No, not until the DQTC has had a full opportunity to review it. I'm not a clinician; I can't make those kinds of clinical decisions. They're still reviewing it, and the submission was not complete.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Do you know what the time frame would be when the review would end?

**Ms Lindberg:** It will probably be the next month or so before they're completed.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** As I'm sure the member is aware, that report then comes to the ministry and is reviewed and regulation change has to occur if it's to be added to the formulary. But I want to make the point that as we look at reform of the Ontario drug benefit plan, the ability to extend special and very expensive drugs such as this to a broader population than is now eligible for the Ontario drug benefit plan is precisely part of our what our reform is all about, because even if it is approved—

**The Chair:** Minister, I think Mr Wilson has a specific question and you're dealing in a more general policy area, if I can go back to Mr Wilson, who had the floor.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** The response worries me, because if it's going the ODB route and you've essentially frozen the ODB—I mean, are you intending to add new drugs to the ODB? I've a feeling that will be the next roadblock.

**Ms Lindberg:** What we've said is that no new product can come in without a cost-neutral or a cost-benefit towards additional. So the program cannot grow, but if we added a new drug or were thinking about it, we could then look at something else that would be cost-neutral or a cheaper alternative in another way.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Do you have a plan in place if it gets approval at DQTC?

**Ms Lindberg:** No, because we don't pre-empt the DQTC. We really have to wait to see what they're going to say about that drug.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** But you'll wait a month for that. Given that there's an outcry for this drug, why can't you plan ahead?

**Ms Lindberg:** I guess we could. We'll be looking at what we're going to do. We're currently looking at new additions to the formulary and what we can do to make them cost-neutral to the program.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think Ms Lindberg identified that under section 8 of the legislation it is possible for somebody whose doctor feels they need this drug to have it made available to them, and we are not imposing any restrictions or turning down those particular

applications at this point.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate the response. Quickly, to you, Minister: It's my understanding that this drug is supposed to be selling to consumers and pharmacies at about \$225 for a monthly dose—I'm not sure, but I think it is a monthly dose—but some pharmacies are selling it to people living with AIDS at about \$500 to \$600. Apparently it's getting a 200% to 300% markup. Is there anything that can be done about that? Is your ministry aware of that?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'll ask Mary Catherine to come back. I find it just appalling that the markup on these drugs is so enormous and the costs are so tremendous. How we can relate them to the cost of the development of the drug seems impossible to do.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** The \$225 is the manufacturer's suggested price, including a markup. Frankly, I think people living with AIDS are being ripped off. They also are not necessarily having access through section 8s, from some of the stories I've heard, but you assure me that you're signing them furiously.

**Ms Lindberg:** I'm signing them.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** First of all, an answer to the markups; secondly, just while I think about it, the problem with the section 8s. As I've been told by physicians here in Toronto, they hesitate filling out section 8s because they don't want to tick off your ministry.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I haven't noticed anybody hesitating to tick off my ministry, but if there is somebody out there, thank you very much.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** That's the language from a meeting of two hours ago. They're afraid, with the reforms going on—there's some sort of rumour, and I didn't really get the entire gist of it, but there's some sort of rumour going on that a whole pile of section 8s going in on it may in fact impede the approval of this thing eventually getting into the ODB. I couldn't understand the reasoning for that, but I'll tell you, it's out there and it came from a very respectable source.

**Ms Lindberg:** From a staff point of view, to have the drug not on section 8 is a much better situation, because we have to do a lot of paperwork: Section 8s administratively are not easy to handle, because you have to get them to the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee and you have to have them reviewed. The staff would sooner not have a section 8, so they will not hold up any review by having a number of section 8s come in.

As to the markup on drugs, particularly drugs that aren't listed in our formulary, the pharmacists can mark up a drug in any particular way they wish. Most of the time we pay the listed cost of the drug, 10% and a dispensing fee. We will pay more than one dispensing fee if the cost is very high, but usually we don't. But

when it's not in the formulary and it's sort of in the open market, the pharmacists can then decide what markup they would like to charge themselves. Some of them are charging 20% to 25% markup, we know, but there are no real rules around that if it's not listed in the formulary, then they can charge whatever dispensing fee they wish; it should be no more than their usual and customary fee, which is posted, but quite often when they get an expensive drug, they do increase that to two or three times.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** The question was more for the minister, in terms of what you intend to do about this. If you get reports of markups that large, which I think are unconscionable, do you talk to the Ontario Pharmacists' Association?

**Ms Lindberg:** No, we talk to the Ontario College of Pharmacists. We send a letter, document it and indicate that we think this should be investigated, and then quite often get a response back.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** So if I get those complaints, it should be in letter form to the ministry.

**Ms Lindberg:** Or it can go right to the college.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think you'll have to go to the college, because it is a self-regulating profession. If pharmacists are in fact gouging people who are vulnerable and who need a particular drug, then I think, as a self-regulating profession, the college would want to know about it and has the power to take some action.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** You have five more minutes, Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, last month I wrote you a letter concerning a local physician shortage in the area of the province I represent, Alliston or New Tecumseth. The letter is dated June 15. I can give you another copy of it if you like. It's talking about the shortage of physicians in the Alliston area, or New Tecumseth, as it's now called. In my letter, I request that this portion of my riding be designated as underserved.

The numbers in the Alliston area—the ratio points to it clearly being underserved. The catchment area for Stevenson Memorial Hospital contains a population base of about 40,000 people. The local medical society informed me when I met with it in May that there are only 14 full-time physicians practising in the area, which translates into only one physician for every 2,857 residents. The local medical society also told me that three additional physicians may be leaving the area because of Bill 50. Those are their words, not mine.

What progress have you made in this matter? Have you had a chance to have anyone review the letter I wrote on June 15, and will you agree to grant an "underserved area" designation to the Alliston, New Tecumseth, area? I can hand you that letter if you like.



**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, I certainly am aware of your letter. I have to say to you that as we discuss this issue and negotiate with the Ontario Medical Association how we can handle physician resource management, certainly we have not been designating new underserved areas until we come to some conclusion on those discussions, which I hope will be by August 1, which is looming.

As I have said on a number of occasions, I don't think the current system of identifying underserved areas has necessarily resulted in new physicians in those areas. I'm becoming more and more aware that just saying something is underserved doesn't mean a doctor is going to want to go and practise there, because for 24 years we've had areas in the north that haven't been able to get a doctor.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I think you understand that the physicians throw that out as a solution, given that it's the only program out there.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Exactly.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** So how do you intend to correct the problem?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That was what I was coming to, looking, as have provincial ministers all across the country, at better management of human resources within the health care system, particularly physician resource management. We have been working with the OMA. It was for that reason that the committee that has been chaired by Dr John Evans has been looking at the question of resource management. Within that, the task force that is chaired by Dean McMurtry from Western has as its first priority looking at underserved areas and trying hard to find a better way of dealing with this issue than merely identifying an area as underserved, putting some financial incentives in place and hoping that somebody moves there.

We had a bit of this discussion yesterday but it's becoming obvious, as I hear more of the history of this program, that money isn't the only thing that gets people to move to an area, and particularly a rural area. It's the mode of practice, it's the peer support, it's the specialists or lack thereof, and in some degree it's their training. They are working in a rural area, in a more isolated practice. They may have to do more procedures than in an urban area they would pass to a surgeon or somebody else down the road. I'm not sure that we have effectively enough prepared people for rural practice or for northern practice.

I think also we tend to say, "Oh, 'underserved' is all northern Ontario," and to look for some solutions to the north, whereas I hear from my members in rural areas, as in yours, that are in fact not that far from the greater Toronto area. Yesterday, the member for Durham-York talked about Georgina township as being underserved within the greater Toronto area.

We have to find better ways of doing it. I think the

better way is going to be by working with the academic health sciences centres, the professions and the district health councils to find both a better way of identifying what we mean by "underserved" as well as a better way of providing support and encouragement to physicians to move to those areas, recognizing at the same time that by every objective analysis there are more physicians in Ontario than are justified by all of those objective analyses and based on our population.

Just saying, "Yes, we will import new doctors from overseas or from other jurisdictions," as we have been doing this summer in order to provide locums, is not the answer, because that then increases the overall pool of physicians and thereby increases our overall costs.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Let me just quickly respond.

**The Chair:** Then I wish to move to Mr Wessinger.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate your comments, Minister, and I think you're right with most of what you've said. I think the current approach is not working. One reason is strictly this numerical doc-pop ratio stuff, particularly if you live where I live, in the hangover of the greater Toronto area.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Urban shadow.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Yes. When I look at the stats your ministry uses to determine how many physicians are needed in my area, I suffer greatly, as do my constituents, from that. I know the district health council is always fighting that.

Secondly, I'll say that in the village of Beeton, just down the road from Alliston but still in the town of New Tecumseth, the caps on GP billings are forcing people to go into larger groupings of physicians in order to cover the overhead cost of medical clinics.

I have a situation that arose this week where of the three remaining physicians in the village of Beeton, one is leaving for ever and the two remaining—because there were four originally—can't, because of their caps, carry the overhead costs of the medical centre in Beeton, so they're going to Tottenham to join with three or four other physicians. That means I'm going to have another large gap in services in my riding. Compounding the problem, the local hospital is the Alliston hospital. Now I don't have any services in Beeton and I might have too many physicians in Tottenham.

I throw all that out, and I sincerely say I don't envy the job you have in trying to come up with a solution on this. I agree with what Mr Conway said in the House last night, and that is that, really, past governments haven't been able to come up with very good solutions. It's been a patchwork approach to date. I wish you all the best in coming up with a solution and I hope you do it quickly because something has to be done. The old ways, I agree with you, are not working.

**Mr Paul Wessinger (Simcoe Centre):** My question really is going back to an issue that was raised by my



friend the member for Simcoe West. First of all, I'd just like to put on the record that I appreciate very much the efforts of the ministry staff with respect to the Simcoe county hospital. I know they're doing their utmost to expedite that process. I'm very impressed with the work that's being done there, but arising out of that aspect of the pure issue alone of the capital projects, I think a more interesting aspect has arisen. I know that in Simcoe county a health system review has been ordered with respect to the whole question of planning future service delivery and rationalizing the system of delivery of service within the county.

I know we've been very successful with respect to restructuring hospitals to date and keeping costs down and rationalizing services, and I'd like to know the planning model we're working on with respect to this whole question of restructuring the hospital system. One of the interesting comments that has been made to me by several hospital administrators I've been talking to is the fact there are a great deal of efficiencies they feel can be obtained in the future in the delivery of services without any loss of service to the patients. So I'd like to know the planning process in that way.

Also, there's a secondary question of that planning process. How are we doing that planning process in view of the fact that we seem to be moving very quickly with respect to targets, for instance, for beds and hospital reducing? For instance, when I started out in Simcoe county we were looking at 1,000 beds per 1,000 patient referrals. It went to 850. Most recently in looking at the planning for Simcoe county, it was at 750, and it has been suggested that 650 perhaps is an attainable goal in the future.

It's a very large question and I know, Minister, that you probably need your assistant deputy minister to perhaps outline this, but maybe some preliminary remarks from yourself and then some comments from the assistant deputy minister.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd be very glad to comment because something that is of great interest to everyone in the province is as hospitals all around the province struggle with restructuring initiated for different reasons in different areas, and that's what interests me.

I was talking to a physician in an area where there is restructuring going on. He pointed out to me that he now had privileges in three hospitals and in one day could have to make rounds in all three of them. That wasn't particularly efficient use of his time and it would make more sense to restructure.

We're looking at it from, how can we provide better service and contain costs? For a number of reasons, it's an issue whose time has come. What has happened is that because it has been begun, I think, over the last five or six years, hospitals have come to look at how they operate and how they can more efficiently operate, hospital restructuring had begun, and then it was

recognized by communities that they had to look more broadly than just at hospitals and look at health system planning and restructuring. That is the task we have asked the district health councils to undertake. I know that in Simcoe county the district health council has embraced that, has embarked upon it and is doing a really excellent job.

#### 1700

The area where this is going to come to fruition earliest is Windsor, which has four general hospitals and which began the exercise of hospital restructuring of examination and over the past two years has moved into a very comprehensive examination of all the health care needs of that community.

The way in which the steering committee of the district health council has worked has been an extremely open and inclusive way, with a labour advisory committee looking at the impact of any restructuring on employees, how any shifts are to occur and how those people can be involved in the discussions.

With the community-based services side beginning to recognize that and as hospitals look at changing patterns of operation—I think in my first day here I talked about the increase in the number of day surgeries, ambulatory care and the reduction in the number of hospital days per 1,000 of population—if that trend continues, as it will, then it follows that you must look at what services are available to those people if they return earlier to their homes and to their communities, to make sure they get the health care they need.

It's not good enough to just look at your hospitals and say, "Okay, we can shave some beds, we can restructure the hospitals," without at the same time involving in that plan what is the whole range of services that are needed for the health of the community. That then leads to the public health units and the preventive side.

We have now, I think, happening in almost every district health council a much more comprehensive exercise in health planning than was started when hospital restructuring was put on the agenda. I believe from that will come a system that is more of a system that is more responsive to local needs and diversity and the special needs of different communications, and that more adequately reflects the differences in distance, in travel times in the north and south and rural and urban as well as a system that makes a better use of all the components and identifies where there are gaps and where new services are required.

The studies that are now being done or planned that I am most aware of and that I think will lead to the greatest change are, as I say, Windsor-Essex, but also Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Guelph, Belleville, Trenton and Picton, that's one, and Perth-Smiths Falls, Brockville, Durham region, Sault Ste Marie, Haliburton county, York region, and in Metropolitan Toronto, where at this

point it's merely a look at the hospital structure.

Along with that are the operating guidelines, and that's having an effect on that planning too. Perhaps Mrs Mottershead would like to address that briefly.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I think the member knows that the ministry did release a health planning framework in 1992. He's absolutely correct in saying that the system is moving along very quickly in terms of restructuring. It is going to prompt us to have a review yet again in terms of the planning parameters, the number of beds per 1,000 population, because with the number we had put in as a benchmark number of 850, we know right now that we are provincially well below that. There are still some problem areas in terms of still having a lot of capacity in the system, particularly in northern Ontario and in eastern Ontario; however, in other parts, that utilization capacity is shrinking and we're probably going to have to revise that number.

We have a number of activities in terms of reviewing that. Some relate specifically to restructuring that has been accomplished already, where a standard has been set. I'll mention the Orangeville-Shelburne area, which is well below the 850. They're closer to 750, and that's in terms of actual implementation. In the Windsor area, for example, that number is being questioned and the district health council is asking whether or not it should use 750 as we plan for the new facilities.

There is a committee that is looking at that, through the joint policy and planning committee, as we review some of these guidelines. We're also looking at utilization of a number of clinical areas, and in that utilization, we're discovering that there are great variances in terms of the hospital performance in a number of areas, where we really need to do more benchmarking and have more standards out there and more information-sharing between hospitals so they can learn from each other and their experiences. You're right, and we will be pursuing that in the next couple of months.

**Mr Wessinger:** For a change of area, this is perhaps more a specific concern that has been raised to me in meetings I've had with public health units; that is, the question of the role of the public health unit, what is foreseen as the role of the public health unit in the whole system in the future. There seems to be a great deal of uncertainty out there in public health units with respect to this aspect, and I'm wondering if I could have some clarification to the committee of where we're going in that direction, what the planning process is.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd like to ask Dr Schabas if he could come back and address that, because it is a question that is being asked consistently, and it's one that I don't think we're yet ready to give a clear answer to. I know that Dr Schabas, who has been the person most involved with them, would want to expand.

**Dr Schabas:** I think there are really two answers to

that. The first relates to the role of the boards of health in providing public health services, and I think we have a very clear direction for that through the mandatory health programs and services guidelines, which set a very clear course, with a focus on primary prevention and particularly community-based and community-wide kinds of initiatives for primary prevention. But I think the question is really alluding to the other roles of boards of health. Of course, traditionally boards of health have been very flexible and have been community leaders in providing a whole range of primary care kinds of services, including things like home care service, providing dental care programs, community mental health programs and a whole range of things.

I'll certainly take up the minister's invitation not to give a clear answer, because I'm not sure we know exactly what the future role will be. I think it will likely be different. There are 42 boards of health, and I think you'll likely find that each board will play a somewhat different role, but I know that many boards are keenly interested in a continuing involvement in the long-term care sector. There's a great interest in providing community mental health programs, and this likely will evolve in a different way in each of the boards; there's certainly not one blueprint at the moment, although the project, which is called the community health framework, is looking at this as well.

**Mr Wessinger:** If I might follow that up—and perhaps you don't want to answer this question; maybe the minister should answer this question. You're talking about perhaps different roles in different areas. In line with the planning, using the district health council, do you then see roles being defined more through the local planning process?

**Dr Schabas:** Well, there certainly are close relationships between many of the boards of health and the district health councils, and I think they work very well together in planning community health services and also in giving an epidemiological framework to the planning of the district health councils.

Again, there's not one set formula, though. I think that if you went to the 42 boards of health and the 30-odd district health councils, you would find a slightly different relationship and I think a somewhat different vision of where the future roles would lie. I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. I think one of the great strengths of our public health system has always been its devolved and decentralized basis, with a great deal of autonomy in the local boards. That's an aspect of our system that I hope we can retain.

**Mr Wessinger:** Fine, thank you.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me add my two cents' worth to that. It's an area with which I haven't become as familiar as perhaps some other parts of the ministry, but I did serve on a board of health for many years before coming to this place. I think there's a real difference



between urban and rural boards of health, certainly in Metropolitan Toronto, as I look at the role of the boards of health, compared to, for example, northwestern Ontario when I was there. I think that integration into the planning process varies depending on where you are.

One of the areas in which I think we can everywhere make better use of the boards of health is in the collection of data, because they are essentially the repositories of the data. As we look at streamlining and doing things more effectively, I think we have to find a way of making sure that these data are transmitted to the district health council so that as it does its planning it is informed by the data collection systems of the public health units; that this in itself will work to make that planning more integrated than it has been in the past.

1710

**The Acting Chair (Mr Noble Villeneuve):** Does this complete your questions, Mr Wessinger?

**Mr Wessinger:** Yes, it does.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr. Bisson, you will have about four minutes, at which time we will move on to the official opposition.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'm going to share the four minutes with my counterpart, for two minutes apiece.

I won't put this in the form of a question but actually a request, because the time doesn't permit. Like most hospitals in the province of Ontario, a couple of years ago our hospital, the Timmins District Hospital, had to go through a process by which it tried to balance out its budget in the deficit recovery plans that were in place about two years ago.

The comment I would like to make is this: One of the things that happened through that process was that it forced employers, being the hospital administrators and boards, to sit down with employees from various bargaining units across that operation to take a look at their budgets in trying to find ways of trimming them so they were able to keep within their allocated envelopes of the amount of money they should have to run their hospitals.

The one frustration I found with that process was that although the process worked, with a lot of work and a lot of give and take on both sides, and, I'll tell you, a lot of sleepless nights on the part of a lot of people through that whole process, including many people from your ministry whom we dealt with, they did come to a resolution of that problem.

The one thing we learned through it, however, is that there's a weakness in the system, the weakness being that there isn't a strong link between people who run hospitals and people who work in them. There was some talk a while back about taking a look at whether there's a way of putting people on the hospital boards—I know this is a sensitive issue for some

people—from within the organizations of the hospitals—to deal with helping to strike budgets, to take a look at cost efficiencies, but more important, to try to build that kind of atmosphere I think you need in a public institution, which is a better understanding of what the goal of the operation is and what's needed in order to operate. I'm just wondering if anything is being contemplated there. I think I probably ran out of my two minutes.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond very quickly to some of the things that you said. I absolutely agree with you, and yes, it has been contemplated and it's very much part of the social contract negotiations that are ongoing, I hope, as we speak at the end of this week. I certainly hope the Ontario Hospital Association will change its mind and sign the social contract, because that will then give us an opportunity to follow through on the kind of suggestions you're making.

**Mr Larry O'Connor (Durham-York):** To start off with, I'd like to agree with one of my colleagues, a member for Renfrew North, who in debate the other day said how difficult a time we are going to have in making some of the decisions in the future around health care and that the decisions can't be just left up to the government; that we need to go out to a more local level. My colleague stated this in the House in debate and I agree with him.

I'd like to ask this: There was a recent announcement of the mental health reform and the expenditure for the redevelopment of the Whitby Psychiatric Hospital, which I'm pleased about. The difficulty I have is that with the whole mental health reform and trying to develop a role for district health councils in this, and knowing that a local group that covers part of the riding, called CO/AD from York region, was very pleased about the mental health reform announcement, how do they fit into the picture in planning for reform and for the future? What role does a district health council have in the reform of mental health care? For example, in my area you've got Durham region, York region, you go up into Victoria-Haliburton; it's a huge catchment area. What role would a district health council play in that sort of reform?

As my colleague from Renfrew North stated, we need to go to the local level. At the same time, as we take a look at hospitals and rationalizing some of that, district health councils obviously do have an important role to play locally.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, just before I answer that question or ask Jessica Hill to come forward and give some help on that question, I wanted to be very clear on my response to Mr Bisson's suggestion, when I suggested that we wanted, through the social contract, to have more involvement of the employees in a hospital in the management of the hospital. In case I set off a raft of correspondence about, "Are you opening up the Public Hospitals Act in dealing with the board question



again?" let me be very clear that in fact I was talking about joint workplace committees and involvement in the operation.

With respect to mental health and the role of district health councils, I think you're absolutely right, and I very much appreciated the constructive contribution of the member for Renfrew North to what was a very good discussion last night of the reform agenda and the need for one, despite the fact that the item on the House calendar was Bill 50. But it was all within context.

Jessica Hill, who is the director of the community mental health services branch, can perhaps speak more specifically about how we're going to integrate the planning of district health councils, particularly in areas where we have the psychiatric hospital in two districts converging, as we do in York-Durham.

**Ms Hill:** Specifically, we're in the process right now of developing implementation planning guidelines for mental health reform. In the reform document, the district health councils are identified as the lead in planning. The guidelines will address both membership and process issues because of the need to both address local planning, which obviously they're very experienced in terms of the Graham report planning, but also how that will roll up into regional planning. That process is taking place right now and we're working with a group of district health council staff and council members.

As well, there are a number of stakeholders who are very interested in participating in planning. Again, they've had experience with Graham. But I think now, more than ever, as we see with our mental health advisory committee, everyone wants to be involved and at the table in terms of mental health planning: consumer-survivors, family organizations, physicians, workers in both facilities and community agencies and so on. The participation issues are very important.

Specifically with respect to CO/AD, there has been a very interesting process that CO/AD and the district health council went through in terms of developing a memorandum of understanding about CO/AD's role in planning and coordination and how it would feed its work into the district health council. It's a bit of a model in terms of the memorandum of understanding.

The coordinating bodies currently are meeting together to determine how they can work most effectively in addressing mental health reform planning with the district health council, and I understand those have been very productive meetings.

**The Acting Chair:** I believe this completes, for now, the time allotted to the government. We now move to Ms Sullivan from the official opposition.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'm going to ask the minister if she'll bring in her quick-response team on two or three questions I have. First of all, under the drug benefit—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Did you see the budget for that?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Under the changes to the drug benefit plan, I have two very quick questions. One of them relates to changing the format of the formulary itself to include detailed information about products that are included on the formulary. I'm wondering if the ministry is seeking assistance from pharmaceutical companies to participate in the production costs of a revised formulary.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'll ask Mary Catherine Lindberg, who can perhaps talk about the work of the drug programs reform secretariat, as well as the advisory committee and working groups, which have representatives from industry and pharmacists and consumers and seniors.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I know all about that. All I want to know is, are the pharmaceutical companies going to participate in paying for what will be an extensive listing of their products for use within the system?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Oh, I don't know; interesting idea.

**Ms Lindberg:** An interesting idea. We haven't looked at that, but we certainly are including the pharmaceutical manufacturers in the development of how we're going to move to prescribing guidelines and away from a list of benefits. We want to look at diagnosis and the drug of choice and the first-line therapy. We'll use pharmaceutical manufacturers, physicians, clinicians, pharmacologists, pharmacy, all the way through.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't understand, really, what's implied in your question. It would be helpful, because if it's an opportunity for revenue, we would want to look at it. But I would be very reluctant to get into anything that was like paying for being on the formulary. You're not suggesting that, I'm sure.

1720

**Mrs Sullivan:** No, I'm not suggesting that. I'm suggesting that there be a participation in the cost of production of the book.

**Ms Lindberg:** Like they do with the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties, where they put an ad in each one?

**Mrs Sullivan:** No, I'm not talking about advertisements. I don't think advertisements are appropriate.

**Ms Lindberg:** We have not addressed that, but it's something we could look at.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Okay. A second question with respect to changes to the drug benefit plan: Are you considering the inclusion or a requirement for the use of mail-order drugs for those conditions which are chronic or require long-term drug therapy?

**Ms Lindberg:** I don't think we'd look at that as the only solution because it would be too broad; I mean, unique areas and unique kinds of things. What we're

doing right now is looking at mail order as any other pharmacy, as any other distribution point of drugs, where if you wish to have a contract with them—and some employers are looking at that for some of their employees—we're not discouraging that because it is a cheaper dispensing fee than we're currently paying and it's a lot cheaper than what the employers are currently paying.

But I don't think we would look at a universal plan across the province to offer those chronic drugs through mail order because I think it would be too difficult to get to some areas. So I think you might look in special areas like nursing homes or something like that, but we haven't really looked at that. We're just investigating some ideas on it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me just say that I think it's something that we do have to look at seriously. As I understand it, certainly in the Metro area, one of the mail order companies is delivering prescriptions sort of overnight for \$5 per prescription.

When we hear, as the member for Simcoe West was talking about prescription fees—and I'm not talking about ODB prescription fees, but prescription fees of \$12, \$13, up to \$20 for some drugs—we have to question, if the market is to work, and this is a program that involves the marketplace, how do we in fact justify \$6.47 as our prescription fee for every prescription when there are now those people who can provide a service for some elements of our clientele for \$5 per prescription? That's something that has to be examined as we try to expand the program as well as contain the costs.

**Mrs Sullivan:** If you were considering mail order drugs for chronic use, what kind of surround would you be able to put on the distributors with respect to educational requirements associated with the drugs in terms of instructions to patients about safe use of the drugs and so on? And how is the drug reform secretariat approaching the issues of product safety and security of the product as it's moving through the mail and other areas?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'll let Mary Catherine answer the more general question, but let me say that I think it's premature to be definitive about any of this. We've just put out a drug reform consultation paper. The secretariat has been working and looking at a number of different aspects.

We know that particularly in the US, a number of health providers are using the mail order system quite effectively and finding that having the 800 line or whatever where there's always somebody there to give advice and counselling in fact is an improvement for some clients over what service they now get.

But I don't want the tone of the member's question to suggest that we see this as a panacea or necessarily

meeting all of our criteria or that we've even progressed in our work on this to the point where we can be specific or definitive about the conditions. But Mary Catherine, I know, has looked into it.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'm going to move to another area now, if I can.

**The Chair:** Mrs Sullivan has the floor, so if Mrs Sullivan wants to hear a response in part by both members, she can, but if not, she still has the floor.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'd like to move on to another area. The area that I'd like to move on to now requires only a one-word answer, frankly. When will an announcement be made with respect to a compensation plan for those who have contracted HIV or AIDS through a tainted blood supply and blood products?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Before the end of this year.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Before the end of this year? Has that been conveyed to the groups?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mrs Sullivan. Is that the fiscal year or the calendar year? Because we deal in fiscal years here.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm sorry. Well, then, well before the end of this year.

**The Chair:** So you're referring to the calendar year. Thank you.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Has that been conveyed to the associations which have made representation on behalf of their members?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, Mr Chair. That's certainly been the position I have said publicly, and I think everyone is aware of my commitment to this issue. But given that the question has been raised, let me talk in a little bit more detail about what is happening.

We have indicated—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Minister. In fairness, Mrs Sullivan notified the Chair that she has a series of questions and she had requested specifically short answers. If she wishes to have the fuller explanation of your consultation process to date, fine, but I'm really guided by Mrs Sullivan in this matter.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think I'm familiar with the consultation process. What I'm eager for, and what I know the organizations are eager for, is a specific time line with respect to this issue, because as you know, Hemophilia Ontario, by example, has underlined extensively that two people die a week. So the issue is one of time. That is extremely important to them.

I want to move to HTAP—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, I would like the opportunity to give some time lines and benchmarks in response to the question that was posed, which was for a definite date. I said the end of the year, but I think—

**The Chair:** Fine, Minister. However, in fairness, Mrs Sullivan has about 12 minutes left, at which point



we will not have an opportunity to reconvene until some time in October to complete these estimates.

I think it's helpful to the process, as I indicated at the beginning, that she would like to get a series of questions on the record so that your staff can provide responses and then we can proceed again in October. It is helpful if the response can be brief and to the point. I'm just simply trying to assist those members to get those questions on the record.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'll make it as brief as possible, but as you know, Mr Chair, the committee has decided to have this meeting in public and there are many people watching who I know want some reassurance that it's not going to be merely an internal process between now and a date that I've generally said will be before the end of the calendar year.

As I have said, I think it's important that we be consistent across the country in our response to this tragedy. The meeting of federal and provincial ministers of health that is scheduled for September will be addressing this issue, but it will be addressing it on the basis of detailed work that is being done by each province.

In Ontario that is being done in discussions with Hemophilia Ontario and the people who have contracted AIDS through transfusions, so that we go to that meeting informed by what we know are their desires for the shape that an assistance package should take. I think that is a better way of doing it than for me to say, "We will make an announcement, this is it."

If it is to meet the very desperate needs and frustrations that those people have felt for five years when they've been seeking a resolution of this issue, then I think we owe it to them to have some consultations before we come to a conclusion. That is occurring over the next couple of months.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Could I move on to the Hospital Training and Adjustment Panel, which, under the social contract negotiations, will have a new face and a new responsibility? From the old face I'd like some written responses.

I'd like to know how much money was spent under the HTAP program, what the breakdown of that spending was, how employees accessed the funds, how many received job retraining—my understanding is that the retraining component was close to zero—and how many people who accessed HTAP actually found new jobs.

I would also like to know publicly now if, as a result of the document that came from the social contract discussions around midnight last night, the organizations—say, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, district health councils, community support associations, community mental health centres, addiction programs, VON—will now be included in the new form of HTAP.

The last thing that I want to know is, what additional cost will be placed on hospitals and other organizations as a result of the HTAP restructuring?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** As I suspect all members are aware, the Hospital Training and Adjustment Panel was created over a year ago with a fund of \$30 million in order to assist employees in hospitals who might be facing layoffs as a result of the hospital restructuring.

In fact, the rather dire predictions of thousands of layoffs and great dislocation that had been made by people who were not supporters of the restructuring and who saw some benefit in placing worst-case scenarios before the public were not realized and the number of layoffs was much less than had been feared, thank goodness.

1730

There have been, I think, at this point about 2,000 laid-off workers in hospitals who have had access to HTAP, but I will get specific figures and data and provide those in writing to Mrs Sullivan, as she has requested.

What we have discovered is that to just look at hospital training and adjustment in isolation of the reform agenda and what is happening across the system has not been particularly fruitful. For example, we were talking earlier about the possibilities of workers in psychiatric hospitals being trained to follow their patients into the community. So as we look at retraining, we find that it's not possible to sort of segregate off hospitals and just do training and adjustment.

It is important that the entire health sector be part of that. So even without the initiatives taken under the social contract, I think we would have looked at whether it was possible to broaden the base of HTAP and in fact make it a Health Sector Training and Adjustment Panel. So the member is quite correct when she says that, as part of the social contract, that is being looked at.

While we have not yet completed those discussions and negotiations and will not have until August 1, I can tell her that what is emerging is the proposal that there be three subsector panels under the Health Sector Training and Adjustment Panel, one of them to deal with hospitals, one to deal with other institutional health care and one to deal with community services.

In response to her question as to whether the Association of Community Health, Resource and Service Centres or the other community-based services would, under the sectoral agreement as part of the social contract, have access to the HSTAP funding, the answer is yes. How much that funding will be in addition to the \$30 million and whether it will be an add-on to the \$30 million or how that will work I'm not yet able to respond to, but once the social contract discussions are concluded, I will be happy to do that with her. I think



we will have a clearer picture of that by the end of this week.

**Mrs Sullivan:** In fact there will be an additional cost to all of the employers to participate in the new HTAP and it will be a substantial one. There are many other costs associated with some of the recent changes from the Ministry of Health to various institutions. I think of a new cost to hospitals, by example, being the loss of technical fees. I know that there has been an increase in the late filing fees with respect to the operating plans and so on. There are a lot of costs that are being transferred from the ministry to institutions and to other groups and organizations that are participating in the social contract.

I'm not convinced that HTAP was successful in the first place. Imposing additional costs on those who have to participate in it through what will probably be, to my mind, an imposed agreement isn't necessarily appropriate.

However, I'd like to move on to—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Can we talk about some of those extra costs? Do you want some explanation of those, Mrs Sullivan?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Not at this point. I want to move on to another issue.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me then make one comment about what I think the member is—

**The Chair:** If it's brief, Minister, but my obligation is to the committee and you have graciously offered to assist with fuller written explanations, and that has been afforded you. So very briefly, and then I would like to get the floor back to Mrs Sullivan.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I just wanted to point out to Mrs Sullivan that I think she's making a rather arcane if not artificial distinction between the ministry and institutions which the ministry funds 100%.

**The Chair:** That wasn't meant to be inflammatory, was it? Please proceed.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'm still proceeding to a different area in any case. I think that people would be very interested in understanding and knowing precisely the policy direction that the government is taking with respect to commercial laboratories. We know the estimates for this year include a \$43-million reduction in payments. We know from the social contract documents, and I can just quote, "The government is committed to the objective of developing an integrated and cost-effective provincial laboratory service system and is requiring the laboratory services review to make recommendations by December 1993."

Behind that, however, we want to know and I believe the public wants to know what the public policy is of the government with respect to the operation of commercial laboratories. Is it your intention to put them in the situation you have placed home care in or child care

in, and move them to a lower and lower portion of the market in the provision of laboratory services, or do you intend to maintain the same ratios and seek a cooperative approach to reducing the total cost of the services that are provided?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We're certainly looking at how we can reduce the costs, and I think Mrs Mottershead can respond on how that is progressing.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I'd like to answer the question by referring to the laboratory review we have going right now.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Mr Chairman, I think it's unfair to put Mrs Mottershead in this position. I was asking specifically for the political decision with respect to the ratio of commercial laboratories that the government intends to maintain in the system. That is not a question I feel it is fair for the bureaucracy to have to respond to.

**The Chair:** The Chair has been rather flexible in the free flowing of conversation here. But to be fair and within the standing orders, when the minister responds directly she may, and through the Chair, ask if the member wishes a further clarification from another person, a member of your staff, and I have sort of been doing that in a more flexible way. Mrs Sullivan has the right to say that response is sufficient from you or insufficient, but if she really wishes to hear from Mrs Mottershead she has that right, and she's indicating she doesn't wish to hear the response in that sense.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Mr Chairman, Mrs Mottershead in her responsibility, in her capacity as an employee of the Ministry of Health, responds to the policy direction that comes from cabinet and government. That was the question I was placing: What is the cabinet's policy and what is its direction on this issue?

**The Chair:** That is to the minister?

**Mrs Sullivan:** That is to the minister.

**The Chair:** If the minister wishes a further clarification, fine, and then we'll proceed.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The cabinet policy is that we have to find a way of reducing our costs in this area. There have been no further policy decisions taken with respect to as we review the services provided to us by laboratories, whether in fact we plan to change the system so there will be any difference in the way we now do it.

We believe there are considerable savings to be found by way of this review, and we certainly have made a commitment to all of the players in the system that they will continue to play a part and that the lab services review will be the vehicle by which recommendations for changes are received by us.

We have not yet completed that review, and it was the details of that review and the facts which I thought this exercise was designed to elicit and that I thought Mrs Mottershead could comment upon.

Let me assure the member that from a policy point of view, there have not been any changes in direction taken at this point, nor will there be until we receive the recommendations of that review. If she would like some details as to what that will cover, then I think Mrs Mottershead would be the more appropriate person to give them to her.

1740

**The Chair:** The time in this sequence has come to a conclusion and perhaps additional information can be provided to the committee. I'd like to move to the third party, and I understand Mr Villeneuve has a question.

**Mr Noble Villeneuve (S-D-G & East Grenville):** Thank you very much, Mr Chair and Minister. I'll be talking about a situation that happened last week. It's something that was very annoying to me and to the people it happened to.

First of all, we have three small hospitals in the riding that I represent, Alexandria, Winchester and Kemptville, and there are some great concerns about funding because they are convalescent hospitals by and large. There are services provided in the Brockville General Hospital, the Kingston Hospital, the Ottawa hospitals and of course the two Cornwall hospitals. Certainly, the constituents in Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville have a wide variety of places to go to, and by and large service has been quite good.

What I have here is a letter that was faxed to me, and I'll read parts of it into the record because I think it's important:

"On Monday, June 19, at approximately 11 am, a fellow coworker was discovered unconscious on the floor of the TV lounge." We're speaking of a truck stop along Highway 401 at Cardinal. "We revived him and helped him to a chair, while an ambulance was called. The gentleman was in considerable pain, was barely audible, while holding his head. Upon arrival of the ambulance attendants, he disclosed that prior to passing out he had a dizzy sensation followed by what he said felt like his head exploded. His consciousness was in and out while en route to Brockville General Hospital.

"Upon arrival at the hospital, he underwent preliminary testing. The attending physician, Dr Comeau, suggested he should be airlifted to Ottawa Hospital for further testing by a neurosurgeon, as they suspected a blood vessel had erupted in his head.

"At approximately 4 pm, he was airlifted to Ottawa as recommended. He underwent testing as prescribed, then he was airlifted back to Brockville." That is the first little different thing. "The reason being he was admitted to Brockville and therefore had to be discharged from Brockville before he could be readmitted to Ottawa."

That's strange. The author of the letter, in bold, black letters, says: "Tell me where this makes sense? This

gentleman's wife was called at home at 1 am and told that she had to pick up her husband at the Brockville General Hospital and take him home to wait for admittance to Ottawa hospital. Upon her arrival at 2:15 am at the Brockville General Hospital she found her poor husband lying alone in the emergency ward. Brockville General Hospital stated the patient had to leave due to bed shortage. The patient was the only person in the emergency ward at that time."

The question here is: Could they not at least have kept him till morning? It goes on. I checked with Brockville General Hospital. They had some sketchy information. They were not able to tell me why the patient was airlifted back to the Brockville Hospital. I understand that as of tomorrow—he resides in Kemptville—he will be admitted to the Ottawa General Hospital.

I understand he is convalescing well. The worst of his problem, whatever it was, is over, but to me this does not make sense. I won't read into the record what this lady has to say about the way this patient was treated at both hospitals, but she has, I believe, a very legitimate complaint. Could you comment on that?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I can certainly comment and say that the facts as the member has portrayed them really concern me. If that's a letter to me, I would certainly like to—

**Mr Villeneuve:** We'll make it available to you, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd like to have it made available, but also to make the point to him that hospitals are fairly autonomous bodies and they and the physicians make the decisions in an emergency, not the ministry, so the letter also has to go to both hospitals to get some explanation as to how the patient was dealt with. Perhaps, if the member would agree, and with the Chair's permission, I could ask Mrs Mottershead if there were some process in place that would ensure there was a factual response and some investigation, because I'm not sure how either of those hospitals would handle it. I think that in this case the patient profoundly deserves the greatest possible explanation.

**Mr Villeneuve:** As a follow-up, and this is presently being done with freedom of information and the patient-doctor relationship etc, I have had some difficulty, and I understand that and I appreciate that. As Minister of Health for the province, in monitoring the cost of air ambulance or ambulance or the ambulatory system, would you be doing audits? To have flown this patient back from Ottawa to Brockville seems rather bizarre. Is a check done by your ministry as to the cost of these things?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I can't answer that—

**The Chair:** Is there someone here who could be helpful?



**Hon Mrs Grier:** —but I think with respect to ambulance services, Mr Ennis can respond as to how we monitor the contracts and the ambulances that we have. I don't know whether it was a hospital ambulance or a private sector ambulance.

**The Chair:** Welcome back, Mr Ennis. You've been introduced once before. The question is about how the ministry checks the flight logs, and accountability with respect to air ambulance billings to your ministry or the service.

**Mr Michael Ennis:** I can respond more generally to the question very quickly. All the calls are placed and monitored through the central dispatch, which is government-run. The dispatcher will respond according to the level or the state of urgency of the call itself. So on the directions that are received from the hospital in terms of the critical nature of the patient, they will then proceed to dispatch either land or air, depending on the specific request.

In terms of the actual cost itself, an individual vehicle call averages about \$250 across the province. That's an average. In terms of an airplane, in terms of responding by air, the average is in the range of about \$2,000.

Again, the dispatch is done on the basis of the urgency, and the central dispatch has to rely on the hospital and the doctor to declare the level of concern and emergency. There are records kept of all these calls.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Would it be normal to fly a patient back from whence he came that because he was admitted to a certain hospital, he has to be released from that hospital? Is that a normal sequence of events?

**Mr Ennis:** From the way it has been described by yourself, I haven't heard of a similar situation like that, but again it's not necessarily totally up to the government or central dispatch. They have to respond to the hospital and the doctor's concern as to how the patient should be transported. We could look into that. As the minister has indicated, in terms of following up the actual situation with the individual, we will look at what happened around the call, what the level of urgency was and why the person was flown back again.

**Mr Villeneuve:** I would appreciate certainly a written response.

Just further, when auditing the cost of ambulatory service, be it air or by road or whatever, is it simply a matter of the ministry saying, "A flight was logged in and therefore it's an automatic payment," or do you have secondary follow-ups to monitor this?

**Mr Ennis:** In this case, there are a couple of ways of approaching it. First of all, in this case, it may have been a dedicated air ambulance, which is actually run by the government itself, so the costs are built into that service as it is. In terms of any other air transport, there's a contract. It's laid out ahead of time as to how much that would cost and the average costings are

known. So there's a process of evaluating how much the cost would be, both in the government-run and in the purchase of service, the contract.

**Mr Villeneuve:** I appreciate that the ministry will be looking into it. I felt I had to bring this before this committee, particularly the timeliness of it. It happened very recently, and certainly, I had no explanation at all. This letter is well documented and you'll be getting a copy.

**The Chair:** I appreciate your willingness to look into the specifics of the case. Mr Villeneuve will share that letter with the deputy and they can proceed.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Ennis, you may want to stay put for a minute and talk about the area of home care.

**The Chair:** Welcome back.

1750

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, on June 25, you announced that commercial agencies would be restricted to a maximum of 10% of the home health care market. Many believe this announcement will not help to improve the system of home care and that this decision was based solely on the NDP's ideology. I will say that no previous government has ever restricted the private sector to 10% of the market. I will also say that previous governments, contrary to the spin your government keeps putting on this issue, attempted to have a balance between private sector and public involvement in the delivery of home health care services. You've tilted that balance.

Following your announcement, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Premier. I want to quote this letter very quickly. It says:

"We are therefore disappointed by your government's recently announced plans to restructure long-term home health care in a fashion which seriously discriminates against commercial home health care providers in Ontario. Frankly, this decision seems to be driven by pure ideology rather than by legitimate concern for those who are in need of long-term home health care or based on valid economic considerations.

"The Ontario Chamber of Commerce believes home health care in Ontario will be more expensive, less efficient, less responsive to the needs of its clients, as well as be subject to lower-quality standards which the industry currently enjoys if the commercial providers are eliminated as planned.

"We fear that the taxpayers of this province will be the big losers in the end when they are faced with higher cost, lower tax revenues and lower levels of service."

Minister, other than ideology, what factors fuelled your decision to starve the private sector from the delivery of home care services?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say that if it's a competition as to who's ideological, I don't wish to compete



with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

No other government, let me say to the member, has embarked upon the kind of consultation that went into the preparation of the long-term care reform. That was begun by the previous government. I guess they embarked upon it. What we did was carry it on and then listen to what we heard, and what we heard, loud and clear, across the province was, aside from an ideological few, the vast majority wishing that this be a non-profit system and that the services that need to be provided to the elderly in their homes or in an institution, as far as possible, be on a non-profit basis.

When we looked at how we should best spend and get the best value from the resources that were available, and knowing that we wanted to maintain our commitment to provide new resources but at the same time were having to find those new resources by reallocation within our budget, we made a very clear decision that it was the best use of taxpayer dollars to pay for salaries and services, not to go into profit.

We have then, as the member has said, outlined a basis by which over a three-year period there will be a shift in those areas where the majority of services are provided by for-profit agencies to not-for-profit, and any new services to be provided and paid for by the taxpayers will be provided on a not-for-profit basis.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I would disagree that the public consultations resulted in overwhelming support for the not-for-profit sector. That's not what I heard during the consultations. I had people lined up in my office telling me the exact opposite. You put the cart before the horse; your government did. It said, "We have a preference," and kept stating it in document after document, went out on that premise, looked for that response and interpreted the results from the public in that way. You had preconceived notions based on your ideology.

Will the taxpayers be paying more to get less with the shift and the driving out of the private sector, will they be paying more to get the same level of service or will they be paying more to get more services? What studies do you have to show that taxpayers are going to benefit because of your driving the private sector out of the delivery of home care services? I want to know what studies and I want them tabled.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, the—

**The Chair:** That was a request, I think.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That was a request. Okay, we will take that request under advisement.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, do you have any studies?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't know whether there are studies available in the ministry. This has been an issue that has been debated, that has been looked at for a long time. I certainly am completely comfortable with the direction that emerged from the consultation and from

the work that was done and I firmly believe that the taxpayers will (a) get better value for their dollars and (b) under this reform have, for the first time in this province, a holistic system, a coordinated system, a system that provides them with the services they need—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I simply asked you whether you had any cost-benefit studies.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** —wherever they happen to live.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Chair, that's not my question. I'll ask Mr Ennis. Are there any studies that the government prepared to back up the decision to drive the private sector out of the delivery of home-care services, any cost-benefit analysis or anything that resembles that? If so, I want those studies.

**The Chair:** Mr Ennis has been asked a direct question. Please proceed, Mr Ennis.

**Mr Ennis:** I'm not aware of any studies that have been developed to show a cost-benefit analysis of profit or not-for-profit sectors.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Then how can you say that the citizens of this province are getting a better deal under your scheme? On what basis do you justify that?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** On the fact that you're spending a dollar. What do you spend it on? You spend it on services and you spend it on the employees and there isn't anything left over to be skimmed for profit. We know that the level of service that has been provided by the profit-making agencies has been good. There is no question about that and I'm not suggesting that they provide in all cases an inferior service, but I certainly believe that as we expand that service, and as we expend more taxpayer dollars, that it is more cost-effective to do it on a non-profit basis.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Do you have any understanding of the fact that if the private sector is involved—one of the reasons that services have been good, what services there are in the province, is because the private sector is there driving down costs, and that both the not-for-profit sector, which is the government sector, and the private sector have worked pretty much in harmony over the past several years to deliver services to the public? It's my understanding that the government sector competes alongside with the private sector and because there is that balance there, we've been able to keep costs down.

I would simply once again ask, on what basis other than ideology do you base this decision? This is a significant decision. You are driving thousands of people out of their jobs, who currently work in the commercial agencies, and you have no basis whatsoever for doing that in terms of cost-benefit analysis, quality of care—you've admitted yourself that the quality is very good in the commercial sector.

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson, I'd like to give the minister a moment to respond in the time remaining, if I may.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Yes, I would like a response to that. I can't believe—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to the allegation that jobs will be lost and remind the member that in fact new jobs will be created in this program and that there may well be people who shift from the private sector to the non-profit sector, but this is a growth area. When the member says that having the private sector there has driven costs down, I don't know what studies he has on which to base that assertion. We've had an exchange here today, for example, about pharmacies' prescribing fees and we're in a contract that says we pay \$6.47 for every prescription. The market is at \$5.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** It's not the same thing.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We are talking about contracts from the public sector to pay for services, and I certainly have not had any evidence that the existence of the private sector in the home support area has made it any less expensive than it has been for government. As I say, we have made a policy decision and I stand by and defend that policy decision.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** You defend it on no grounds whatsoever.

Secondly—

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson, I—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Chairman, just one sentence.

**The Chair:** If you have a question, perhaps.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** She just used a private sector example of \$5 to justify a non-profit thing.

**The Chair:** That's fine, but—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** The \$5 dispensing fee is coming from the private sector.

**The Chair:** —this is not a debate; this is the estimates and unless you have a question—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The point is, the structure doesn't permit the kind of open-ended competition you're suggesting.

**The Chair:** Minister, Mr Wilson, please. With it now being 6 of the clock, I wish to advise the committee that we have approximately two hours and 52 minutes remaining to complete our estimates review for the Ministry of Health. Since I'm advised by the House leaders that the intersessional will begin next week, this committee will stand adjourned to reconvene for Health estimates at the call of the Chair.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Don't bang the gavel for one second. I have some additional information in response to questions that I will leave with the clerk.

The committee adjourned at 1759.





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- Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)
- Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

O'Connor, Larry (Durham-York ND) for Mr Lessard

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Mahoney

Wessinger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Wiseman

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Arnott

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Morin, Gilles E. (Carleton East/-Est L)

Villeneuve, Noble (S-D-G & East Grenville/S-D-G & Grenville-Est PC)

**Clerk / Greffier:** Decker, Todd

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LA 2743  
XC 26  
- E 17

Document  
Publication



E-12

E-12

ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 5 October 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 5 octobre 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Health

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Ministère de la Santé



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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 5 October 1993

The committee met at 1540 in room 151.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order and reconvene the standing committee on estimates. When we last sat, we were in the process of consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Health.

I remind the committee that we have two hours and 52 minutes remaining of the time that has been allocated to us by the House to complete these estimates. From our last sequence of rotation, I believe we'll begin, if it's agreeable, with a half-hour segment for Ms Sullivan and the official opposition.

I would like to welcome Mr Decter, the deputy minister, to the table because he was unable, with other responsibilities, to be with us at the front end of our estimates. I would like to officially welcome him to these estimates along with the minister.

If there are no questions at this point, I'd like to proceed. Before Ms Sullivan, though, are there any items which were raised during the previous time allocated for estimates that the ministry came today with any responses to? Have any of those been prepared?

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** My understanding was that we'd addressed most of them. I'm not aware of any outstanding ones. Certainly I'm sorry; I have not come with any today.

**The Chair:** No, that's fine, Minister. If those persons who made requests would like to raise that issue, they can when it comes to their time in the rotation. I'll recognize Ms Sullivan.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** The first issue that I want to turn to is the impact of Bill 48, the social contract bill, and the recent regulations on ambulance service in Ontario.

As you know, under the Ambulance Act and the regulations to the Ambulance Act, there are specific definitions of an "emergency." I will read from regulation 19 of the Ambulance Act which says, "'Emergency' means a situation where delay in responding to a call for ambulance service could endanger the life, limbs or vital organs of patients."

The social contract bill indicates that where an employee performs a critical function as prescribed by the regulations and the employer is unable to meet those critical functions through the unpaid leaves of absence, the employee can be deemed to be critical under the regulations and the employer has the option of initiating special leaves.

We were all quite taken aback, and I understand that

the ambulance operators in fact only latterly have received the regulations, to discover that in the regulations under Bill 48, "'Critical function' means services or activities that, in the opinion of the employer, must be performed in order to prevent the injury to or the death of people or the destruction of property, or to provide an emergency intervention to prevent the worsening of an injury or an illness."

The regulations go on to say that there has to be adequate training and so on. Clearly, the adequate training is covered by the regulations to the Ambulance Act. I have several questions with respect to this decision which to me seems to be fairly sloppy thinking on the part of the government.

The first is, why is the government not deeming or declaring by regulation certain employees to be exercising critical functions? The leader of my party has indicated that the ambulance attendant is one who, for all purposes, would be understood to be exercising a critical function, as would be firemen or policeman in the course of their duty. I'm particularly speaking about the ambulance attendant who, by the regulations under the act, is clearly operating with a critical faculty associated with the work.

Why then, in the first question, has the government not declared the ambulance attendants to be a critical function? Why are they leaving that to the employer? What standards therefore does the government intend to ensure are put into place with respect to the critical functions associated with the work of the ambulance attendant? Does the government concur that a situation in Mississauga, which has been reported to the House, where ambulances are being sent out on a first-call-response basis with only one attendant to the site of an accident or to answer a call—does that kind of situation meet the government's responsibilities?

I want to know what the government's standards are with respect to the provision of emergency services and what the government sees as critical and what the standards are, therefore, for ambulance services in providing those services.

The second area, with respect to the same question, is that, as you know, the government has removed substantial operating dollars from the overall ambulance budget as a result of expenditure cuts, and has added a few, but not all, of those dollars back in terms of redistributing resources to those services which are particularly stressed. Despite that redistribution of \$6 million out of the \$10-million cutback, there are ambulance services where the operators are, on their own,

going to the banks and borrowing money to ensure that the services are operating, and many of them, including several that you will know about and many that I know about, are operating in a deficit position.

I wonder what impact studies you have done with respect to the delineation of the ambulance services under the social contract, what kinds of direction you are providing to the services with respect (a) to their deficit and (b) to the standards of service that are being provided, and where you intend to go from here. Are you intending to put ambulance services out of business in communities or to put people at risk? The services in fact will not be able to operate at the standards which were previously required.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond, and perhaps some officials from the ministry then can provide the member with additional detail. Let me assure her categorically that it's certainly not our intention to diminish the level of services provided. In fact, the entire intention behind the social contract was to preserve services and protect jobs.

Let me remind her that the regulation under the Social Contract Act was only about compensation. The regulations and standards of service under the Ambulance Act have not been changed in any way. The purpose of the regulation under the social contract was to assist employers in dealing with the impact of the reductions as a result of the social contract. The member didn't mention, but I'm sure she's aware, that the emergency services did not sign the social contract, and so the impact upon them was greater than if they had.

The definition, even under that regulation in the Social Contract Act, is quite clear that a critical function means services or activities that "must be performed in order to prevent the injury to or the death of people or the destruction of property, or to provide an emergency intervention to prevent the worsening of an injury or an illness."

I think that's a fairly clear set of criteria which enables an employer, as they apply the changes in the social contract, to identify which employees are performing critical functions and which ones are not, and to take advantage of the provisions under the social contract that allow them to defer some of the time off without pay in the case of those who are performing a critical function.

1550

**Mrs Sullivan:** Could I interrupt, Mr Chairman, because the minister is to a certain extent reiterating some of the factual detail that I had included in my question. Let me go to some additional factual detail.

The social contract target for ambulance services was well over \$3.3 million per year. Over the course of the social contract, we're looking at some \$10 million which will be basically clawed back from ambulance

services, and which will become due and payable if it can't be met through leaves of absence by emergency attendants at the end of the period.

In the meantime, the number of people who can be laid off, whether by special leave or whether under the original terms of the social contract bill, in fact only meets 50% of the target. With the number of people who can be safely laid off and still provide ambulance service at the reduced rate that you have required as a result of the expenditure control act, they will still only be able to meet 50% of the social contract target. In other words, there will be an additional reduction for 50% of the work that will be, I am told, 44,500 hours of work or 2,782 eight-hour vehicle shifts.

Where are you going to make that up? How are you going to ensure that the standards of emergency care provided through ambulances and ambulance attendants in every community are going to be met? I put it to you that with the regulations, with the expenditure cuts that have already taken place and with the provisions of the social contract bill, you are endangering people in the community because it will be impossible to meet the standards that are required under the Ambulance Act.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That's the member's point of view, and I suspect that's the point of view of the ambulance operators—

**Mrs Sullivan:** And the attendants, Madam Minister.

**The Chair:** Mrs Sullivan, please, the minister has the floor.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you. I hope Hansard got it, though.

**The Chair:** We allow one interjection; you've had your one interjection. I'd like the minister to be given the time to have a full response.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** What we have asked all ambulance operators to do is to submit to us a plan that can be reviewed to ensure that as they deal with reductions—the member uses words such as "clawed back" out of their budgets. What in fact has occurred is that the amount of transfer payment that they might anticipate has been reduced, and they have been provided with mechanisms to accommodate that reduction by way of salaries and wages. We then encourage them to look at their entire operation and ensure that they can maintain service while at the same time reducing the amount of payroll they have.

We believe that it is possible for them to do that, and that in many cases the plans submitted to us have not looked at every aspect of their operations to see if there are savings or streamlining or administrative changes that would assist them in meeting the renewed targets. We want to work with them to do that.

We had indicated to them that we did not want them to lay off people until we had completed the regulation-making process under the social contract. That has now



occurred. In the interim, there was in fact a \$6-million reallocation of funding to enable many of the private sector operators not to have to go to the bank and borrow, which again in their worst-case scenario was what the member had suggested.

In response to the question, at this point predictions that there will be a significant diminution in the level of service by emergency service is not substantiated, and we now believe that we have the mechanisms in place and can work with the operators to make sure it doesn't happen.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Madam Minister, I suggest to you that if you are indicating that in a health service, an emergency service which is highly dependent on human resources, on trained individuals to carry out the work of providing the service and where the capital equipment requires, under the act, continuous updating and safety precautions, there is going to be a reduction in the payroll, to assume that service will not be reduced in a comparable way is to be living in a dream world.

Every dime that is taken out of payroll is a dime's worth of value in reduction of service. If you, as many people, already suffer from delayed ambulance service—in my own community there is no longer ambulance service to one of the communities where service had been on—as a result of expenditure cuts, additional to that will be a situation where the reduction in payrolls will mean that in the two major population centres in my community there will be increasingly reduced service. That is not unique to my community.

In virtually every area of the province, whether it's Mount Forest, Simcoe, Barrie, Ottawa, Hamilton—Hamilton is in a crisis; we know that you've flowed them \$250,000 on the deficit issue—on the deficit issue there's still \$2.3 million worth of deficits left for which there is no funding. You have left the operators on the hook. To the guy who needs the ambulance service or to the woman who needs the ambulance service, your answer is not adequate. If they cannot get the health care they need in a timely fashion with the trained personnel they need, then you are in fact placing those people at risk with these decisions. A critical function means more than simply a method of compensation. The critical function is described both in the Ambulance Act and in the Social Contract Act and the regs under the Social Contract Act. It is more than simply a compensation scenario by the words that are in fact even used in the regs. I suggest to you that you have not taken into account what in fact is becoming a province-wide emergency.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to a number of the points the member has raised. First of all, let me point out to her that 21% of emergency health service employees are part-time workers earning less than \$30,000 a year and are therefore exempt under the social contract agreement. And let me remind her of a

statement that I think was made by somebody from the Metro emergency services in the press yesterday, while complaining about the social contract and cutbacks, acknowledging that, at least in Metro, a vast majority of the use of the service was for transfers between hospitals.

We should make a distinction between the blanket assertions the member is making and those sections of the service that are not emergency service, service that has to be provided for the benefit of the patients, I acknowledge, but where there may well be opportunities to look at more effective ways of providing that service. I suspect the member, as I have, has also been at scenes or with emergencies where you had the fire, the police and the ambulance all arriving at the same time in response to one emergency call. That is in many cases necessary. In others, there may well be ways of looking at a better coordination between emergency services and a more effective administration of the services that will enable them to work in a cooperative way. I, as somebody with an emergency—the first response was one person who came to provide service while the ambulance got there. So different communities do it in different ways.

What we anticipate will happen in many areas as a result of the social contract, and what we encourage employers to do, is to discuss with their employees better ways of providing the service and ways of accommodating the reduction in the payroll. I hope that all of the ambulance operators for whom the member speaks—and I suspect it is primarily the private sector operators—are involving their employees, unionized or non-unionized, in all of their decisions and in their discussions, because, let me assure the member, it is only through cooperation and involving the employees truly in the decisions that affect them that the best decisions can be made and changes can be accommodated in a way that protects both jobs and services, which is our intention.

1600

**Mrs Sullivan:** The minister, with her response to queries that I have put, goes to the root of the problem. There indeed is no strategy with respect to what is an appropriate way of approaching expenditure reduction in this entire sector. The minister has pointed out that indeed full-fledged ambulances are used for transferring patients from one health care setting to another. Why wasn't there an option presented by the Ministry and the Minister of Health to allow operators to introduce a secondary level of service and to be compensated for that secondary level of service that did not require indeed the fully trained ambulance attendant during that period? That is a strategy lack that has not been addressed.

The minister speaks of police, fire and ambulance reaching the site of an accident or of an emergency at



the same time. Why hasn't the minister undertaken a full emergency services review that combines all of those services in a scenario that looks at the various response teams at the levels of activity that could be appropriately taken? Has the government even looked at the entire transfer of ambulances to the Solicitor General? Are these things on the table at all? Certainly they are discussed in the community and they are strategic questions that could well have been addressed in terms of meeting the targeted expenditure reductions or approaching the targeted reductions rather than in a way where, under the existing legislation, people can be put at risk.

The minister has reiterated the \$30,000 level. In the ambulance services that is moot. Ambulance attendants, on average, are paid \$34,000 a year unless they're in government or non-profit or municipal services, where their average is significantly higher than that. So we're talking about dollars that are being removed from compensation to skilled health care professionals that cannot be made up in any other way, where there is an admitted deficiency in funding from the ministry. The ministry would not have put the \$6 million into the system if it did not recognize that deficiency. And the person on the street who is facing an emergency situation is subject to being placed at risk.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, I think the deputy can add, perhaps, to some of the long-range issues that the member raised.

**Mr Michael Decter:** Yes, just to comment, because we are here at estimates, the estimates presentation shows that our actual spending on the ambulance service was \$167 million two years ago, \$170 million last year, and it will increase, we believe, subject to the survey that's going on in the social contract, to somewhere in the order of \$174 million. So there is not an expenditure reduction in this area; there is actually an increase. I won't get into a debate on the adequacy of that. We're working very closely with the ambulance sector to manage the social contract issue.

I should be clear that we have not put \$6 million or any other amount back in in some form. What we have done is recognize a number of pressures that existed prior to the social contract, as we would in any other year, so that is not an unusual event. That is an adjustment to the base that goes on in every year as we reconcile.

I should make two comments on longer-term things. One is that the Ministry of Transportation is leading some work looking at the broader issues around what I think it's calling community transportation. The second is that under the framework agreement in the health sector we have an ambulance review. The Swimmer report of some time ago has enormous support from the bargaining agents in the ambulance sector, but so far we've not been able to convince ourselves that it could

be implemented without significant additional cost. However, we have a very focused review going on over the next 90 days involving all of the participants to get at that very question: whether a new government structure could be accomplished within the budget for the next three years. I think we would be as happy as anyone if that review demonstrated that we could improve the service with the new governance model without adding to its cost. We are in fact looking, through those two reviews, at a number of issues here.

I should just underscore that this is a very difficult issue because of the nature of the service, but it isn't the case that every person in an ambulance service or in our own emergency services is someone who is performing a critical function. The real impact of the critical function regulation is that it allows a deferral of the liability to the end of the social contract period.

The operators have been worried about that building as a liability that they would face down the road. There is some offsetting impact; that is, the wage freeze for the three years in the social contract has a larger impact over time as people exit from the top end of the pay scale and enter at the entry level, and the freeze on movement in grid also mounts up. In deferring a liability through the critical function regulation, there is also an accumulation, if you like, of a benefit through the period.

We are out on a survey of all of our agencies because of the policy decisions on the LICO, low-income cutoff, the part-time issue and the charitable issue. So all of our steps to date have been interim and we will make some adjustments as we get information back this month from the survey.

We are as a ministry trying to work very closely with the sector and we are very respectful of the obligations that exist for the sector under the Ambulance Act and also those that exist for the ministry. If legitimate deficits are incurred, that liability rests with the ministry, which is why we do an adjustment after the year. But a legitimate deficit can't be created by ignoring the provisions of the Social Contract Act in this circumstance.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think that it's clear, from the amount of my allotted time on this issue, that there is enormous concern, that there is not a sense of comfort in the approach that the government has taken with respect to the ambulance services and that there is a sense that this should be a clear priority.

Just in a very short question which I have in the time left to me today, I have been interested in reviewing the chronic care role study and the OHA and chronic care hospitals' response to that role study. The response from the hospitals and the chronic care hospitals has been quite adamant in underlining that a level-of-care tool should not be used but that a client-focused level-of-need tool should be used in the assessment of people as

they are moving into the long-term and possibly the chronic care situation.

The argumentation is that the individuality of the patient should be taken into account, that there can be much greater ease in providing a continuum of care for the individual through a level-of-need tool rather than a level-of-care tool. I'm wondering what consideration you are giving to that proposal and when you will be able to respond to the kind of question and the direction implied if a change from the care tool to the need tool were implemented.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm glad to have a chance to talk about the chronic care role study. The purpose of the study was to develop an inventory of existing services within chronic care facilities. It was really the first time that this had ever been done within the system. So in July 1992 the most extensive survey of hospitals ever undertaken in Ontario was conducted to develop that inventory. There were extensive consultations and a very hardworking committee that undertook all of that.

I met with them in May when they presented the chronic care role study to me at the end of their work. We have distributed their report widely, to hospitals and district health councils, consumers as well as providers, and I'm sure the comments that you make reflect the comments they are sending back to us and the comments they have as a result of that. We are in the latter stages of analysis of the role study as well as the recommendations it contained, as well as some of the response that there has been to it. Within the next couple of weeks, we certainly expect to be able to provide a response to the study, and the issues that you raise will be addressed by that.

1610

I should say that despite having been engaged for over a year in this study, planning processes that were under way or indeed have been initiated in a number of chronic care facilities have not been held up. Both Riverview in Windsor, which is under consideration as part of their restructuring, the Perley Hospital in Ottawa, St Mary's in London, St Joseph's in Guelph and St Peter's and Chedoke McMaster in Hamilton, as well as Riverdale in Toronto, are all in the process of doing planning and looking to their own futures. Our task will be to mesh that into an overall approach to chronic care within the system. Of course, part of that will be identifying a way of better evaluating the needs of the people in those hospitals so that we can make some clearer determination and definition of chronic care, who needs chronic care and what is required to provide that care.

One more point: What was particularly interesting to me in the study was the emphasis on the need for rehabilitation and the shortcomings of our system with respect to providing rehabilitation to people in chronic care. I think one of the real challenges for us is going

to be to address those recommendations in a way that can be done and make the best use of existing facilities as well as identify where there are no facilities for rehabilitation.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Minister, I have a concern I wish to raise with you—this is something we've discussed informally in the House; we've also corresponded on this issue—in the form of a letter that I'd like to read to you from a constituent of mine named Reina Todd from Fergus. She'd written me a letter back in March of this year, addressed to me:

"Dear Sir:

"Having tried all the normal and accepted avenues to obtain funding and assistance from established government agencies and failed, frustration leads me to write to you.

"In 1985, my husband, Mark Todd, and I were involved in a car accident caused by a 17-year-old drunken driver in another vehicle. Mark sustained massive head injuries. He was 24 years old at the time, an athletic, healthy young man with a promising future ahead of him as a musician. We had been married for just over a year. Mark is now reduced to a vegetative state, unable to speak or care for himself. Our ensuing struggle to obtain our right to live with dignity in our own home has proved long and bitter. I am still battling for aids for daily living.

"Following the accident my husband was treated at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto for eight months, but their prognosis for Mark was so hopeless that I took him home to die. My parents-in-law (Ontario residents of 20 years) transferred to Calgary, Alberta, and offered us a home with them. Mark was transferred to Foothills Hospital. Mark received excellent attention and defied the death sentence passed on him by Sunnybrook Hospital (leading me to question the quality of care that Mark received).

"On his discharge, the Alberta aids to daily living program provided a hospital bed, table, wheelchair, air mattress, sheepskins and other supplies I needed to take care of Mark at home. I have taken care of Mark at home for the last eight years. By doing this, I have saved this country a total of \$16.77 million, based on the average daily cost of hospitalization of a chronic care patient multiplied by eight years.

"In 1992, we decided to return to Ontario with our 18-month-old son to be closer to my family. I was led to believe Ontario was a leading light in the field of disability programs. It seems I was labouring under a grave misapprehension. I am appalled to find that the Ontario assistive devices program provides no assistance for beds or equipment. I was instructed to find a bed anywhere I could. It proved no easier to acquire a wheelchair. After many fittings, an appropriate chair was found for Mark at a cost of \$6,000. This cost I was



expected to pay myself, because the Ontario ADP would not cover the cost. Apparently, the chair is not for my husband but for me, because my husband is unable to operate the chair himself. I am astounded to encounter discrimination of this nature and in such circumstances. The Ontario ADP is discriminating between levels of disability; the less disabled a person is, the more likely they are to receive help. The more severe the disability, the less help is available.

"I am told to lobby for funding. Why, I ask, should I have to? It is your obligation to provide a wheelchair, with no excuses. In the meantime, Mark is suffering. Without a suitable wheelchair, his seating position is changing. This means that to fit him, any wheelchair will have to be so specialized that it becomes increasingly more expensive the longer I have to wait. I approached the Ontario March of Dimes for a chair, only to find that they follow your guidelines and can only supply one if Mark can move it himself. Of what use is this program if it can only supply people who are already eligible under the ADP program? United Way should be looking at the distribution of their funding and the March of Dimes should be changing their mandate.

"The issue is still that ADP is discriminating on the levels of disability, as is the March of Dimes. I should not have to stay up until 2 am writing letters so that my husband can have a chair. I have saved you a vast amount of money and still cannot have a chair that every Ontario citizen is entitled to, should they have the need.

"Upon contacting the Human Rights Commission, I discovered that my husband has no case because they are only able to determine human rights between able-bodied persons compared with disabled persons; to compare two disabled persons is not within their terms of reference. How is this so? Are these people subhuman because of their disabilities? This is a concern, not just for me but for all Canadians who do more than pay lipservice to the belief in human rights. I intend that my plea will be heard provincially, nationally or internationally if need be.

"As things stand now, my husband has been deprived of mobility and a chance for me to maintain a normal level of social involvement for him. I want to provide a secure family environment for my young son, and that includes having his father as an integral part of his life. It is despicable that it should be necessary for people to battle in order to receive some assistance from a government that is ready to offer aid to any Third World country that asks for it. I am asking for something now.

"Because Mark is unable to verbalize and direct his own care, I must remain in the home with him. I am housebound and forced to live a disjointed life. Your policies are, in fact, disabling my life as well as his. I am not asking for very much, just some funding to

ensure that I can continue to keep my husband at home with his family. I only want to give Mark a small measure of happiness; he has already lost so much. The alternative is to split my family, place Mark in an institution (at enormous cost) for the rest of his life.

"I appeal to you that this problem be addressed immediately, not only for my sake but for all others placed in this untenable situation. The drive in the '90s' is to move people from extended care situations into their own homes. How can this ever be accomplished when the 'red tape' inhibiting the existing programs makes it impossible to satisfy the demands that are, and will be, made of them? The loopholes in the net of home care need to be mended before this can be accomplished.

"Constantly, we are encouraged to integrate the disabled into our lives, not to treat them as anything other than worthwhile members of our society. I'm asking for your help to see that I can do exactly that. Thank you.

"Yours truly,

"Reina Todd."

I went to see Reina Todd, actually, when she phoned my office, and she gave me this letter. I can personally attest to every fact in this letter, that it's true. We've written you, we've brought this to your attention, and I'm not satisfied with the response we received. What can you advise me to tell Reina Todd?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, I'm sure the member will be aware that for me to get into discussing an individual case is not appropriate, and I have responded to his correspondence with respect to this constituent.

I have to say to him that the assistive devices program, which has now been in place for, I think, 10 years in this province, is intended to give the kind of support that he suggests is necessary in this case, but I acknowledge it doesn't meet everybody's needs and it is a program that pays up to only 75% of the cost of eligible devices.

**1620**

I have to say to him that when it was begun in 1982, it was originally restricted to those aged 18 and under. It has been growing since then, and between 1986 and 1990, coverage was greatly extended. In fact, it's grown from a \$2-million program 10 years ago to \$89 million in 1992-93 and, as he has pointed out, we still don't meet everybody's needs for everything that they require. The number of people served has increased from 2,000 to 135,000, so as I say, I think it is a program that goes as far as we've been able up till now to meet the needs of people. I grant you, there are some people who may not qualify. If that lack of qualification is due to some anomaly in definition, then that's perhaps something I can look into, but I don't think I want to leave you under the impression that, yes, it's a program that will



do everything that somebody requires.

We believe it is a good program. As we look at long-term care, we will obviously have to look also at assistive devices and at the other elements of the system that will help people to maintain their independence and the aids to independent living. That's, quite frankly, what the reform of the long-term care system is designed to do. As you know, it's something that after years of discussion we have now begun.

We have some distance to go, but we will be adding more funding to the \$2 billion we already spend on long-term care over the course of the next four or five years in order to, in some cases, address the issue of how you compensate people who do care for disabled and chronic-care patients at home as opposed to having them in an institution. It's the first time anybody has addressed that issue. So as we wrestle with expanding the long-term care program and making it more flexible and more designed to meet the needs of individuals, there will be changes in the future.

With respect to the specifics that you raised, I can't in this forum say any more than I have said to you in correspondence.

**Mr Arnott:** Do you think it's sensible that the assistive devices program discriminates on the degree of disability the person has, such that someone who cannot move a wheelchair is denied assistance?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That's what I meant when I said I wasn't sure of definitions. Michael Ennis, who is the ADM with respect to that program, is here and I could perhaps ask him to come forward, Mr Chair, and see if he could help us with that particular question: the rationale for the definition that we have and how that is administered.

**The Chair:** Mr Ennis has been before the committee; welcome, Mr Ennis. You were present for the question; please respond.

**Mr Michael Ennis:** The question of criteria and eligibility is correct as has been defined. At this present time the rules that are applied to assistive devices are that if an individual's not able to move the chair or carry out certain motions that allow the individual to actually move the chair, that's one of the criteria that is applied indicating that they would not qualify for that type of wheelchair and that assistance.

That's one of the criteria at the moment and, as the minister's indicated, as we move forward with the broader initiative of long-term care, we need to look at all those criteria in terms of assistive devices programs and, as you in fact have outlined, the other supports that can be available to an individual to remain at home.

In summary, that's one of the existing criteria at the moment. We have thousands of applications and that criterion is used.

**Mr Arnott:** What would you do—if, for example,

someone is a paraplegic and can propel themselves in the wheelchair versus someone who is a quadriplegic and cannot, that would seem to me to be a clear-cut case of discrimination on the basis of the level of disability that person has, such that the person who is more disabled gets nothing and the person who is somewhat disabled, in that he only has the use of two limbs, gets assistance.

**Mr Ennis:** I'm responding by saying that is one of the criteria that's used. You're saying it's a discriminating criterion. I wasn't agreeing on that; I was agreeing on the fact these are the criteria that are used at the moment in the program to invest the thousands of dollars that go into a mobilized wheelchair. One of the criteria is: Can the individual make any movement or motion themselves? Then they would be considered eligible for the motorized wheelchair to a certain subsidy level.

**The Chair:** Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** Thank you, Mr Chair. I think Mr Arnott will have another question in a minute or two, but I just wanted to touch—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr Arnott, do you have some additional questions?

**Mr Arnott:** I'm just not at all satisfied. I hope that indeed the commitment that has been made that you will review this matter is such that resolution—that it will be looked into and that, in the context of your review of existing programs, something will be done.

I find it totally unsatisfactory that the government can't in some way assist this individual who literally has looked after her husband in their home for eight years. She's just a young woman we're talking about; she's only 29 years old. She's a saint. The cost that would have been incurred by the provincial government, whether it be Alberta or Ontario, had she just simply said, "I'll put him in some sort of an institution," she has saved the government considerable money because of the love she has for her husband. If the government can't support her in some way, the government is extremely heartless.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, I'm acknowledging that there are cases like that and that they have never in the past been served by the programs that exist. As part of looking at chronic care, where there are some interesting proposals for providing chronic care out of an institutional setting, which would mean that we would then have to put in place the programs that would allow the kind of support you're suggesting, as well as looking at the entire long-term care, that will lead us to a review of those policies to deal with the anomalies you identify.

With respect to the individual case that you identified, I guess we are concurring that yes, as the program now stands that is the eligibility criteria. But I think the

deputy wanted to add something to that.

**Mr Decter:** Just to make the point that we sometimes become focused, as would be appropriate at estimates, on the \$18 billion that we're before you seeking. The reality is that most care in this society is still provided on a volunteer basis by family members in the home, largely by women. So our government-insured system and our programs do perch on top of this.

Now, in most cases that's an issue where some of us take a day off when a child is sick, and it's not a huge incursion on our lives. In the case you describe, there has been an obvious and major burden on the family. But I'd just like to stress, because I think we sometimes feel that because of \$18 billion and 31% of government spending we ought to be able to solve all of the problems out there, that I think we try pretty hard to spread the resources. The long-term care reform really does look at it in a broad sense. In the interim, our assistive devices program is a program that's grown by adding additional devices, by expanding categories over a little more than a decade, but we are far from a universal insured program in assistive devices.

I'd just be a little careful. We're not discriminating in the sense of the Human Rights Commission. We do provide for some products and not for others, and I think the case you bring forward simply underscores how far we have to go on the long-term care side to really provide for this burden not to fall back on women in the home, which is I think a fundamental issue in the long-term care reform. We don't have any easy answers for you on this, other than that this is why we're undertaking the long-term care reform.

**Mr Arnott:** I'll defer to my colleague, but I'm not finished with this issue.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I want to begin by touching on the subject of ambulance services in the province. I agree with Mrs Sullivan's remarks earlier. Minister, indeed I think you've got a crisis brewing in the province with respect to the provision of ambulance services, both emergency transfers and non-emergency transfers, and I take some exception to your comments with respect to non-emergency hospital-to-hospital transfers.

I want to convey to you a story that occurred in my riding some two weeks ago when I had the unfortunate opportunity to contact Metro ambulance services. I had a patient who was brought into the hospital late one evening in Toronto for a number of emergency tests. The patient was ready to be discharged from that hospital and transferred back to the Alliston hospital at about 4 o'clock in the morning. The family called me in the wee hours of the morning because they were waiting several hours. I think they'd been waiting for probably five hours for an ambulance transfer before they called me at my home on a Sunday morning. I therefore, on their behalf, called the Metro ambulance dispatch, and

out-of-town dispatch, and talked to the communications supervisor. He spent, surprisingly to me at the time, the first 10 minutes of our phone call complaining about the NDP government and the social contract.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** As I said, everything but the weather is the fault of the social contract.

**1630**

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Maybe that is true, and maybe we will get to the weather in this province at the rate things are going.

There I was trying to convey the seriousness of this issue on behalf of my constituents and I allowed this gentleman, who in the end turned out to be very helpful, to tell me for 10 minutes about the shortages at Metro ambulance services. There has been a 33% reduction in services alone at Metro. He told me that it is not uncommon now, for these hospital-to-hospital transfers out of town, to expect families and patients to wait in the corridors of a Toronto hospital for up to 12 hours. I know the system wasn't all that great in the recent past, but it's certainly getting ridiculous.

For you earlier to, in my opinion, slough off the seriousness and the anguish that families go through when they are literally waiting in the corridors—as you know, when it's a hospital-to-hospital transfer, as in the case experienced two weeks ago, the patient is left in the corridor of the emergency room for up to 12 hours; in this case it wasn't quite 12 hours but it was a number of hours, and they were told by a communications supervisor that they were absolutely powerless to do anything because they simply did not have the ambulance crews, ambulance officers available to do anything about it. We're told that you have to wait for an out-of-town ambulance to come in, on a Sunday in particular, when they weren't expecting any ambulances. Somebody jokingly said, "Perhaps we have to have continual car accidents in the Alliston area so we can ensure that ambulances are going to Toronto on a regular basis to bring back these non-emergency transfers."

I can tell you at first hand the anguish experienced by this family, and it's the third time since I've been an MPP that this sort of situation has arisen. They are not happy with the service that this government is providing and they are very much concerned about both the non-emergency transfers and the emergency transfers. We read in the paper that the time people will spend lying on the pavement waiting for an ambulance is ever increasing. I think you've a real crisis on your hands.

I want you to comment again on the non-emergency transfers, hospital-to-hospital transfers, which in the eyes of the patient and in the eyes of the family are emergencies. This patient was quite seriously ill.

With respect to what you've done under the regulations of the social contract concerning the designation of "critical function," I do have a question that was



asked of me by ambulance operators, and that was why the onus had been placed on employers to designate their employees as a critical function.

Secondly, I want to talk to you about these unpaid days off or special leave provisions. But first I need your comments on the transfers and also on the critical function.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm sorry; I was distracted and didn't hear your last sentence.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I'd just like you to respond to the situation I put forward with respect to the Alliston-Toronto transfer and, secondly, why the onus was put on employers to designate their employees as critical function.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to the situation that you describe in Alliston, which I don't deny for a moment is very troubling. I was interested that you said that this is the third time in your career as an MPP that you'd been faced with this kind of situation. I think that flies against saying it's all because of our government and the social contract.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** But it's getting worse, Minister. We never had 12-hour waits before.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** To suggest that for a 4.5% reduction in salary expenditures there's a 33% reduction in service is, to me, quite out of balance. If the first 10 minutes of the conversation with the dispatcher was taken up in complaints about the government, I think that's perhaps not a particularly good use of his time.

We have a very good emergency service in this province. We have in fact a record of acceptance and public acknowledgement of its value that is higher than in many other jurisdictions, and people come to this province to look at our ambulance services. They are run by a variety of ways, not all by the ministry, and that means there's a complex web of decisions that goes into any request for a transfer.

If somebody, as you say, was seriously ill and was left in a hospital corridor for 12 hours, I think that person has a legitimate cause for complaint. To say that the primary cause for that complaint was because that at that particular time and on that particular day there was not an ambulance available, I'm not sure I'd say that was the only reason for that happening.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** That is the only reason. There was no ambulance available to do an out-of-town transfer, nor was there one expected in a reasonable period of time.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Okay. Then I would ask, as a member of the family, why were they in a corridor if they were seriously ill? Where was the doctor? Where was the hospital? Why were they left in the middle of the night to call their MPP? That raises some serious questions.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I can answer those.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm not sure I accept your conclusion that it's all because 4.5% was taken out of the wages of the ambulance system by either the province or by how Metro established its priorities for that.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, just to be fair, it wasn't my conclusion; it was directly from the ambulance service itself, which said that it was a direct result of the social contract, that we now are second-class citizens in rural Ontario and have to wait up to 12 hours for a non-emergency transfer. That is unacceptable. I had my own riding association secretary last year wait 14 hours for an ambulance, and she didn't call her MPP. I guess it's a "who you know" health care system now. It's become absolutely unacceptable.

With respect to—well, I'll get into that in a minute. Have you finished your comments?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** With respect to the critical function estimate definition, I think in my response to Mrs Sullivan I indicated that the regulation is to provide employers with the tool to implement the social contract in a way that recognizes the critical function performed by some of their employees and to give them some guidance as to what the definition of "critical function" is. I don't think the ministry or whoever's implementing the social contract—the Ministry of Finance has the primary responsibility—is to go in and say, "This employee performs a critical function during their entire shift and this one doesn't." It's the employers and the employees together who, we believe, are best equipped to work out how in fact the social contract may be implemented.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** With respect to the 33% cut I referred to earlier, that's right out of the Toronto Star on October 2.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Oh, it must be completely accurate.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** It says, "The number of ambulances on the road in the late afternoon has been cut by about 33%, with less severe reductions in the early morning hours." This is quoting somebody from Metro ambulance.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That's exactly the same story that ended up by saying that the vast majority were non-emergency transfers.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** That's right. I guess the point I'm making with you as strongly as I can is that non-emergency transfers, when the family's in anguish, when the patient is left in the corridor—you asked where the hospital and the doctor were. The doctor's done with the patient; he's gone on to another patient. The hospital said, "Ambulances aren't our problem," and it gave them the phone number of Metro dispatch and said, "Here, you bug the dispatch and see if you can't get an ambulance faster." The hospital is not responsible for the ambulance service. It's Metro ambulance, as it's referred to.



Very quickly on this, I want to talk about, with respect to the social contract, one thing that has bothered me in the area of emergency services. I'm glad the deputy minister is here, because he negotiated the social contract. It is with respect to these unpaid days off. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it seems to me—I use the term “stacking.” The deputy, in his comments earlier today, used the term “deferring a liability.” It seems to me that ambulance operators, effective March 31, 1996, are going to be owing their employees perhaps 36 unpaid days off. Because they took 36 unpaid days off during the three-year term of the social contract, these days are stacked and there'll be a huge bill to ambulance operators and to the province of Ontario. I think we see that in other areas too with respect to the stacking of unpaid days off or special leave provisions for firefighters and police and a number of other emergency services.

My contention is that your designating the ambulance sector employees as a critical function is not going to save any money, that at the end of the social contract there indeed will be, as the deputy calls it, a deferred liability, there will be a huge stacking of days off, and in the end the taxpayers of Ontario are the losers in this.

1640

I would ask you to explain what will happen on March 31, 1996, with respect to the stacking of these days off, what the bill will be, what the cost will be at that time to the taxpayers of Ontario; to dispel for me, if you can, the fact that I truly believe, after having examined this, that these are deferred savings, that no matter who the government is in 1996, a huge bill is going to come in and the taxpayers of Ontario are in for a shock at that time.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think the deputy began to explain that. I'll be happy to ask him to do it again, but the conclusion we arrive at as a result of examining this is quite different from the one the member comes to.

**Mr Decter:** Let me try again. First of all, I only wish I had succeeded in negotiating a social contract. As it turned out, the negotiations didn't succeed and the social contract was in fact legislated some time after my involvement ceased, just to be clear on that portion of your question.

On the issue of what will happen April 1, 1996, I don't have a crystal ball or any magic to forecast that. I will tell you that the impacts on individual employers in the health sector vary a great deal. I won't name institutions because I don't think that would be fair to the managers who have spoken to me in confidence about their situation.

In one hospital of significant scale, the CEO indicated to me that between the wage freeze and the freeze in grid movement, his hospital was in the position that it needed no layoffs and no days off without pay. For another major hospital, the impact of those same two

measures was something on the order of half a million dollars of a \$9-million target.

To give you some idea, depending on what assumptions people had made, what provisions they'd made for various uncertainties and how they run their policies, and in fact the age structure of their staff—if you've got quite an aging staff and you have some retirements out the top end, which is the experience the ministry is seeing now, and you either don't need to fill those positions—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Decter:** Not in my case, but we are having a lot of people take advantage of the factor 80 provisions.

We have a hiring freeze on, so as we restructure that work, we're going to end up over the three years of the social contract with our payroll coming off due to those factors. For the stacking or deferral that you speak of, there's uncertainty around it; frankly, that's why the provision is permissive, not mandatory. We have said to employers on one side, including ambulance operators, “There will be a reduction in the funds you receive,” and on the other side, the government has in legislation done a number of things to offset that reduction.

It's very difficult at this point, and that's why we're out on a survey and we're working with individual operators to know how all of that works. This is new for them as well. Some of them have reacted, I think overreacted, on the front end because of uncertainty. They have in some cases taken reductions directly out of their employees' paycheques, something that's not legal under the act, and we've had that brought to our attention. In other cases, I think they've set in motion reductions in service that are much larger than what they'll need to accommodate the social contract.

What I would say is that I cannot give you a precise answer because it's going to depend on how all of those things work together. But offsetting any accrual of liability for unpaid days under the special leave or the critical function provision are these other factors of the freeze; the freeze in grid movement; exiting, which generally takes place out the high end of the pay scale; entrance, which tends to take place in the low end of the pay scale. I think it will take time.

The other question is, will the ambulance operators come into local agreements as of April 1, 1994, which would be our wish, which would reduce their social contract obligations by some 20%? There are a number of uncertainties in this piece.

Of all the areas we're facing, this is the one that's had the most attention from us because it's the one that, because of the nature of ambulance service, poses the most difficult problem. A hospital certainly does have people in emergency and critical functions, but a much smaller percentage of its staff would be in a critical function. For example, in our psychiatric hospitals we

were able to go to weekend levels of staffing on the two Fridays; that was a significant reduction in cost for us without a significant impact, if you like, on the service. We had a weekend level of service rather than a week-day level of service.

I know that's an answer that's far less precise than one would want to give. I think in a few months, when we have some good case studies, we will be able to be more precise about it.

We have seen the ambulance system achieve some significant savings in the past two years through restructuring and efficiencies, and we're hoping to see some of that aided by the provisions of the social contract through the next period. But I don't think it's as easy as saying this is a simple deferral of 12 unpaid days to end up as a balloon in 1996.

I guess I should also point out, because the question's been asked about the regulation—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** Deputy Minister, could you conclude your response.

**Mr Decter:** I'll conclude. I'd just point out that the regulation is permissive in saying employers "may"; so is the legislation on special leave. I think if the regulation had tried to be mandatory, it would have been found to be ultra vires the statute. Frank is here to reinforce that, in case I'm trying to practise law without a licence here.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** We'll talk about ambulance licences in the next round; you mentioned the term "licence."

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Mr Wilson. We now turn to the New Democratic caucus, and I recognize Mr Bisson.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'd like to first of all congratulate the minister for taking on the task of being Minister of Health, probably one of the more difficult ministries to manage in light of where we find ourselves fiscally, not only here in Ontario but across the country.

We're looking, obviously, with great passion at what's happening in other provinces and how they're dealing with expenditure problems and revenue problems, looking at the kinds of things they're doing in their provinces. One of the difficulties we have in the province we happen to govern is that people look at Ontario in isolation from other places sometimes when they compare what's happening, but it's the same as you'd probably see in Manitoba or Quebec or Nova Scotia etc.

I say that because it seems to me that in all the discussions I've had across the province of Ontario, as I'm sure you've had, minister, as have the members of the opposition, I think there's a keen recognition that government needs to do everything it can to manage the health care system better. Nobody argues, from opposi-

tion side or from government side, that we should do away with our health care system. We all want to play our part in making sure that we preserve health care for Ontarians and Canadians overall. Where we probably differ is how to deal with the management of the system; how to make sure there are dollars at the end to pay for health care, to make sure that Aunt Mary or Uncle Joe, if they're sick, can get into the hospital and get taken care of.

Particularly with everything that's gone over in the last year through expenditure control, through the social contract, through various initiatives that were started by the previous minister as well, overall it's been not too bad a job done. I'd like to point that out, because often the minister is criticized, for reasons people will understand, but there's not keen appreciation of the job. I tip my hat to you.

I want to raise that because there's an issue going on back home, in the community of Timmins. We're in the process right now of completing the building of a brand-new district hospital that will serve all the community of Timmins, to Hearst to Kirkland Lake to everywhere else in northeastern Ontario.

It's a magnificent building, as I'm sure you're aware. Just to give you an idea, I was talking to an installer who was installing our CAT scan system there recently. He said he had been in most hospitals throughout North America and found this to be one of the best-built hospitals of all when it came to the way they put it together, that there was a lot of thought put into it. I think we need to tip our hats to the local people who worked on it as well as the people at the ministry.

But for all of that, there are always problems. One of the things I've found is that often problems are somewhat based on reality but sometimes much exaggerated. What I'm looking for from you here today is some reassurance on a couple of issues—and you may have to call some of your staff forward for that—around the opening of the new Timmins and district hospital. I'm concerned about the question of CAT scans and also the budget for the new hospital that will be opened. Maybe I can start with the CAT scan issue.

**1650**

You would know that they will install a CAT scan in that new hospital in order to serve northeastern Ontario and other areas within the province in terms of the imaging needs of our community and others. One of the things that's being said right now by some of the people in the medical community in Timmins is that the bad old Ministry of Health is not going to allow the hospital to open that CAT scan wing because of financial constraint. I'm wondering if you can put to rest those fears and let people know in the good city of Timmins and other places out there that indeed the CAT scan unit will be operating, that it will be operating for the benefit of not only those people in my community but



other communities around the province.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I certainly am aware of the Timmins hospital and the fact that it is nearing completion and is an amalgamation of Porcupine General, which is in South Porcupine, and St Mary's. I want to congratulate that community for its support and its initiative in working together over time to build a new hospital. I know it's taken a while to get it to that point, and having visited Timmins and been introduced by the member to a number of people involved in the health system there, I know how anxiously the hospital is awaited.

The specific question of the CAT scan you haven't raised with me before, which amazes me, and therefore I'm not sure I can respond to that with any degree of detail at this point. The normal process is that a hospital, as it submits its operating plan, includes in that the operating of the CAT scan; it is required, if it is an existing hospital, to identify the savings, which are very real, that it can have as a result of installing a new CAT scan. With respect to a new hospital that is putting one in for the first time, I would anticipate that as we review with the hospital its operating budget, discussion as to the operating costs of the CAT scanner will be part of that discussion. But I'll be happy to try to examine that and give you privately, seeing we're out of estimates time, some additional information on that.

**Mr Bisson:** In fairness, the reason it wasn't raised is because I was faxed today an article from one of the local papers—I didn't provide you with a copy of it and I should—where a particular individual in the community was asserting that a number of services would not be provided in the new hospital. I know the issue because I've been following it very closely—I've been dealing with people in your ministry; I deal with people on the board—so I do know what the answers to my questions are, but I guess I'm looking for a bit of assurance that indeed that CAT scan unit is in place, that it is being installed and would be operating.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm not able to give you that assurance today. Certainly to me, if the money was raised in the community, as I suspect it was, to help provide a CAT scanner, then looking at the budget and making sure it can be operating makes some sense.

I did want to respond to your opening comments about the issues faced in this province and other provinces, because I had the opportunity since our last meeting in estimates to meet for the first time my colleagues across the country at a federal-provincial meeting of ministers of health. I think it's worth putting on the record that it's a very non-partisan group. We all come from different political backgrounds, but the issues that are being faced in every province are very similar, and the goal of both containing the growth in expenditures while at the same time changing the system to make it less focused on institutions and more

dealing with prevention and planning for the future is a common one throughout all governments.

What is not common is the way in which the savings and the cost constraints are achieved. We all saw yesterday, I think, the Alberta announcement that salaries would be rolled back by 5%. They hope it will happen voluntarily—

**Mr Bisson:** Is it termed "draconian" in Alberta?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I wish them good luck, but certainly they've made no doubt that that is what is going to happen, whereas in other jurisdictions we've tried to do it through negotiation.

**The Vice-Chair:** I now recognize Mr Hayes with a question.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** Just for some information: President Clinton, for example, with his plan for the health care system in the US, calls it making history, that his plan is very historical, but of course we made that history quite a few years ago, thanks to people like Tommy Douglas—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Hayes:** It was he who certainly pushed it, yes, in Saskatchewan.

What I'd like to ask you, Madam Minister, is, can you tell us why there's really such a strong interest in the system that we have here in this country, and also, while you're at it, maybe you can tell us why there is such a radical difference in the coverage and the cost of medical care in the US versus Canada and Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd be glad to comment on that. There has been an enormous amount of interest in our system as a result of the move that President Clinton has been making. We've had US television companies up here looking at everything from our anti-tobacco strategy to our insurance system. I had the opportunity to be on an open-line show across the US and to field questions from California to Florida to Buffalo, which was a new experience. They wanted to know why we didn't have contingency lawsuits and how we could have a good health system without contingency lawsuits, which was, I thought, an interesting approach to the whole question.

What it brings home is that we have such a first-rate system. We tend at sessions like this and in question period to focus on the problems, but when you look at what we've got, every poll says, I think, that 96% of the people in Ontario believe we have an excellent to a good system, which has been created over the years by all of us and which we are struggling to maintain in the face of enormous and escalating costs, and in the face, of course, of a whole change in the basis upon which the system was brought in, which was a 50-50 sharing between the federal and the provincial governments.

Some years after Tommy Douglas introduced the plan in Saskatchewan, he made the comment that the first



challenge was providing access to the system for people regardless of their income, so that nobody would be denied health care because they couldn't afford it. He then said the second challenge was to make sure that we reform the system, that it provides the best possible care in the best possible way. It's taken us 40 years to really come to grips with that second step: reform. The US is only now beginning the first step: making sure nobody is denied health care because they can't afford it.

What is interesting when you look at the two systems—there was a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* earlier this year that pointed out that US hospitals spend on average 40% more on each patient than those in Canada. It was a five-year study and it found that Canadian hospitals use high-tech medical equipment much more efficiently and spend far less on administration. They said that by adopting Canadian practices, US hospitals could save as much as \$40 billion a year. We tend to sometimes lose sight of the fact that our costs are lower, and as a result of having a single insurer in each province, as opposed to the plethora that there are in the US, our administration costs are much lower. The proportion spent on public and private insurance administration in Canada is 1.2% of our health spending; in the US, it's 4.9%. The percentage spent on hospital billing administration is 9% in Canada and 20% in the US.

What to me is most important is that our health status indicators show that our people are healthier, despite not spending as much as in the US. For example, our infant death rates per 1,000 births are 7.2 compared to 10 in the US; our life expectancy at birth in 1990 was 77 years in Canada and 75.9 in the US; one-year-olds who are immunized is 85% in Canada and 48% in the US.

What we're trying to do is to preserve what is already an excellent system and make it better, and we're being looked at with some envy by people south of the border who have yet to get to the point we're at.

1700

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister. That concludes the 15 minutes allocated to the government caucus.

**Mr Hayes:** Are you sure there's not a minute left?

**The Vice-Chair:** One minute.

**Mr Hayes:** I'd heard that New Brunswick is actually prepared to privatize its payment and collection system in the province. Have you any idea how that would affect—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I saw that story, and all I know is the newspaper story, but perhaps the deputy can explain the details behind that.

**Mr Decter:** I don't think all the details are sorted out. The New Brunswick government is contracting its claims processing to Blue Cross and shifting some staff involved in that area.

**Mr Bisson:** Is that also termed "draconian" in New Brunswick?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, "privatization."

**Mr Decter:** There's almost nothing one can make as a change in health care that someone doesn't describe as draconian.

**The Vice-Chair:** I now turn to the Liberal caucus.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Actually, I had lunch with Frank McKenna on Thursday and we discussed what's occurring in New Brunswick and the initiatives they're taking in terms of starting a process that will involve the private sector not only in the health card billing-claims process, but also in providing the kind of system that frankly we lack in a desperate way in Ontario, and that is the database system that can be used for health management and planning.

I am very impressed with what Frank McKenna is doing in New Brunswick, and I am discouraged that Ontario is not at the same speed ahead as New Brunswick in terms of the development of a database management system for health planning purposes. We should be there now and we are not there now.

**Mr Bisson:** Is it privatized? Are you suggesting it be privatized?

**The Vice-Chair:** Order.

**Mrs Sullivan:** There's nothing wrong with the private sector being involved in the technological development associated with a database management system. It seems to me that under this government, the previous government and the government before that, we have been looking at health care as a method of economic development and this is one area that should be pursued. I am very disappointed that it has not been pursued to the position it should be at now.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Can I clarify that I think we're mixing some apples and oranges here. Of course there is nothing wrong with attempting to market our expertise and what we've developed as a result of our first-class system and our publicly funded system here, and that is something that I hope, through our health economic development strategy, we will do in a more effective way than has been done in the past.

What my colleagues were raising was the contracting out of services that are currently being provided by the public service, and I think that's a totally different issue.

**Mrs Sullivan:** It's one that I support, however, when there can be efficiencies that will leave more money for health services delivery, and surely that's what we're looking at.

I wanted to discuss another issue, and I think that while it may be awkward to raise it, people are interested in it. When the deputy came before the estimates committee on a previous occasion with the previous minister, first of all, there was a discussion of the

reorganization of the Ministry of Health. We have seen some of that reorganization occur to meet some of the priorities that the government has put into place and to change approaches that were perhaps not as effective as they could have been.

We have, in the course of that reorganization and subsequently, seen significant change in the personnel of the ministry, and we hear of another one today, as we understand that Dr MacMillan will be leaving the Ministry of Health. We know that Mr Drazin left just recently, that senior people in the legal division left last fall, and indeed that a deputy minister who, if I may say so, has gained a lot of respect during his period of time here, is leaving, as we know, for personal reasons.

I'm asking the minister what steps are being taken to adjust the ministry organization plan, what kinds of human resources structures or initiatives are being put in place to ensure that the senior people with experience and skill are being recognized, and what are you going to do to correct a view that the Ministry of Health is falling apart?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It's certainly not a view that I hold or that my predecessor holds. It may have been when we took office in 1990, but I am absolutely confident that as a result of the reorganization and the strong leadership skills and management that has been put in place, the Ministry of Health is in a position, and is better equipped than ever before, to implement an agenda that is very innovative, creative and proactive, and that has been clearly spelled out by my predecessor, as we enunciated, for the first time, goals and strategies for the ministry.

As the deputy responded in response to a question from someone else, as a result of the factor 80, as an example, there have been some people who have been with the ministry for some time who have chosen to take advantage of that opportunity, because as I think is well known, our government believes that we can achieve our agenda in an effective way with perhaps fewer public servants and by looking at streamlining and layering within some ministries and throughout the public service. But we are only doing that in a way that contributes to the better management of the system and to the achievement of our goals, and in a way that allows those people who feel there might be some advantage or who for personal reasons wish to seek a change in career to do it in a way that provides them with some security and dignity.

Nobody feels for a moment that there are not successors within the public service who can carry on, and while I know our current deputy has a reputation that goes far beyond the boundaries of this province, with his knowledge and background in health care, I am confident that when the Premier makes an appointment, the management of the ministry will be in good hands.

**Mr Decter:** If I could just make a supplementary.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** You disagree with me?

**Mr Decter:** No, I am certainly not going to disagree, and I appreciate the member's kind words. I would echo the minister on two dimensions. I promised the ministry I would not do another reorganization. I think those can be very trying for morale in the ministry. I inherited a reorganization that was under way when I arrived and saw it through.

I think the basic structure of the ministry is sound. We will, however, from time to time, find that a program located in one division might more appropriately be in another. A good example of that is the assistive devices program which was located in the health management group because it was essentially paying claims. When you look at who its client group is, it became clear that we should move it to the long-term care division because we do want to address the problems that the Chair raised earlier when he wasn't the Chair, and so we will, over a period of time, do that. We have consolidated some of the management functions of the drug program secretariat with the drug reform secretariat in preparation for implementing a number of reforms.

We've had some changes in management personnel through restructuring. We've also had a number of people who've taken the factor 80 retirement. What I would say that gives me great comfort and confidence is that we have a large group of very talented people not yet in the senior management group who are capable of moving up in the organization and taking on additional responsibility. We also have some people who are in the senior management group who have done very well on tough assignments. Donna Segal's leadership of the negotiations with the OMA this summer and Theresa Firestone's work in the drug program area I think are just two examples of many people in the ministry.

It is a difficult time. The changes in the health system are not easy ones for the provider groups and the ministry absorbs, at a staff level, a great deal of anxiety and in some cases anger at change.

#### 1710

However, I guess the final thing I'd say is I think there is a really capable core of people in the ministry and that although you are seeing some departures, I think the ministry will be able to handle and successfully implement the priorities that have been set for it in a fairly difficult environment.

I have to say on my own front that deputy minister of health is not a long-service position these days, although it is about three years since I was retained to help with negotiations. In that time I've had three federal counterparts as deputy of Health, three BC counterparts, and I think I'm by now the third-longest-serving, or fourth-longest-serving, depending on one phone call that I don't know about in another province, of the 13 deputy ministers of health across the country.



So it is a time of some change and I think that takes a toll, but there is good succession behind the management team in the ministry and I think you'll see evidence of that over the next number of years.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you. I want to move to the question of how the ministry is organized to deal with challenges of the future. We recall that Dr Orser presented a report, I suppose now three or four years ago, with respect to decentralizing the funding and delivery of health services to a regional base. I see that Dr Naylor, head of the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, has just recently spoken at the May annual meeting with recommendations which are comparable although slightly different from the Orser recommendations of a few years ago and would have decentralized planning, decentralized funding through a regional envelope, the regions being responsible by example for the payment of physicians and determination of the level of physician care or what services would be provided by local hospitals to meet regional needs and so on.

I want to explore now as to whether those ideas are on the agenda, if the government has made a decision with respect to whether services should be decentralized. We have seen some decentralization efforts in long-term care delivery. I'm thinking more of the acute and primary care issues, but a funding envelope that would cover all of those areas. And if that is the priority and direction of the government, what other necessary steps will be taken within the next short period of time within the mandate of this government to implement a decentralized system?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me start by describing the system as it is now in place and the decentralization that has occurred. Primarily, that decentralization has been with respect to the planning and the strengthening of the district health councils and the assigning to the DHCs a very primary role in a number of the reforms that are under way.

Long-term care, the member will know, was essentially assigned to the DHCs to set up the long-term care committee to make recommendations with respect to allocation. As we look at mental health reform, that too is going to be essentially a role that the district health councils will play, and there have been a number of other instances where we have strengthened their capacity to both do the planning and move towards recommendations with respect to the allocation of funding.

We have worked with the district health councils and established a joint task force between the district health councils and the ministry to look at some of the issues the member raises, but more particularly the future role of the district health councils. They've been in place for 20 years, but it really is only in the last six or seven years that they have assumed a leadership role within

the health care system and been acknowledged to have that role.

So the joint task force, who were members of the DHCs and the ministry, looked at issues of accountability, performance, quality assurance and how we could move forward along those lines, not into the devolution and funding envelopes that you describe but leading in a direction that gives much more responsibility to the district health councils.

The other thing that is happening and that is happening at the same time is, in a number of areas, the realization, almost, of comprehensive health organizations which go a long way towards being the envelope funding that you've described and which we believe need to be experimented with but have to happen as a result of communities seeing that this is in fact the way in which they want to manage health care in their area. Where those are emerging most strongly is in the north: Fort Frances, Rainy River and in the vicinity of Sault Ste Marie, or it's now something Algoma. It's got a new name; it changed—Wawa? I thought it had another collective name. Anyway, those are areas where CHOs seem to be achieving the greatest acceptance and where I believe we will see models in place that will enable us to evaluate what in fact that means.

The other thing that is happening and again is driven very much by needs identified in different districts covered by DHCs is of course hospital restructuring. As that occurs and as communities begin to look at a rationalization of their hospitals, and Windsor is the furthest along of any community in doing this, they recognize that if they are truly to plan a health care system and not merely a hospital system, then they have to begin to look at all of the other spending on health care that is occurring in their districts. That leads to a much more integrated and comprehensive look at their systems and to the development of a plan that identifies the needs and the gaps in the existing services along the whole range of health care, from community-based services to institutions.

So, while in answer to your question I can say, no, at this point I do not see us moving holus-bolus across the province to the kind of decentralization that you're asking about, there are within the initiatives that are ongoing a number of examples that encourage and give authority to communities to plan their own health care systems, because that is the basis of the reforming of the system that we envisage, which is allowing communities to identify their needs and the ways in which they want those needs to be met.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Just for the record, could I correct: I think I called Earl Orser Dr Orser, and he's not Dr Orser.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Since you reminded me, let me just pick up on his very helpful report which was done some years ago and which is now being looked at in greater



detail by a coordinating committee looking at south-western Ontario in the light of the developments that have occurred since Mr Orser began his work, those developments being the enhancement of the role of DHCs as well as some considerable progress in hospital restructuring.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister. Mr Bradley, you had a question.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I asked you in the House a question about services for Alzheimer's patients. There are three things I'll fire at you since there's so little time.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Before you even start, I know that a briefing note suddenly appeared as a result of your question, but I haven't got it with me. So maybe whoever had it could produce it again and then I could give you more details than I could yesterday.

**Mr Bradley:** I'll tell you the three things so you'll know. One is the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre. Are you going to speed up the funding for that since the Niagara Peninsula members toured that on Friday? We believe that it should proceed at a more rapid pace than it is at this time. Larry O'Connor was visiting on your behalf.

The second thing is Alzheimer's patients, with two kinds of services: There are not enough beds, and everyone is phoning the MPPs to see if they can bump somebody else out of line and get their mother or father into it, which we naturally are unable to do and it would be unfair to do. So what we need are more beds in the Niagara region. The second part of that is that we need more respite care because while the funding I think has been frozen or may have been adequate in the past, the problem is that the number of Alzheimer's patients is increasing.

Third, I raised one day, probably more with the Minister of Community and Social Services than you, a situation of the young McLaughlin girl who has multiple disabilities, a little baby with multiple disabilities, and there is not enough home care for that person. That may come under Comsoc rather than you because I think in the House you directed that to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'd be interested in any of your comments on the progress for people in those categories.

1720

**Hon Mrs Grier:** On your last one, I'm afraid I haven't got any details with me at this point. I certainly am aware of the needs of the Niagara—I never remember the name—Peninsula Children's Centre. That has been raised by you, by my colleagues in the Niagara Peninsula and Mr O'Connor, who of course toured the facility I think on Friday and has spoken to me about it.

I am very much aware of that and I hope—I think I said this the last time you asked—to have an announce-

ment with respect to the future funding in the very near future. All I can say now is that "now" is nearer than it was when you last asked me about it.

With respect to Alzheimer's and the intermittent care, the Niagara region already is piloting an intermittent care program which provides one week of relief for every six weeks—this started in 1992—in six of the municipal homes. Also, the Niagara region has been providing in-home respite and home day care. So while there may not be sufficient, there is in that region a program that not all regions already have. I know, as I said in the House, the difficulties with Alzheimer's patients and I acknowledge that there are not at this point enough facilities, but working towards meeting that need is part of what the long-term care program is going to be about and I hope we can do that.

**Mr Bradley:** In the meantime, it's very difficult—I don't think I'm telling you anything you don't know when I say that it is extremely difficult for people and it's largely children and/or spouses who are looking after the Alzheimer's patients. In the early days of the disease it's a little easier, though still a challenge, and in the latter days when it's progressed it is a fact that the mental stability of the people looking after the patients is affected by the fact that they are just a real challenge to deal with and it takes people with specialized abilities to do so and specialized facilities to do so.

I know you have great sympathy for these people and they're at their wits' end as to what to do with them. Many of them are at the stage now where the only option seems to be a nursing home.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** But even a nursing home requires special facilities and I think that's what I was talking about in the House. I understand there's over 3,000 long-term care beds divided among 28 facilities in the Niagara region. I don't know how many of those are identified for Alzheimer's but that might be something that should be raised with the long-term care committee that is currently preparing the long-term care plan as part of our reform for that region.

I will be glad to take it up with them and see whether specific needs of Alzheimer's patients and their families are being factored into their plan, because that would be where I think it would best start.

**The Vice-Chair:** The time for the Liberal caucus has expired and I move to the Conservative caucus.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, because of the time constraints I can't pursue in any great detail the remainder of my questions with respect to ambulance services. I would like, though, for you to report to this committee the status of the emergency medical services review, the Swimmer report that was released in December 1991; what is the current status of the report's recommendations is my specific question.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Can I just respond to that? I can do

it very quickly and do it right now. As part of our discussions with respect to the social contract, a commitment was made that we would establish a multi-sectoral committee to look at the Swimmer report. Our view had been that many of the recommendations in the report made sense and we began to implement some of them, but the governance issues of putting in place one system would add considerable costs to the system and the administration of it.

As part of our discussions with the employees, who are very much concerned about this, we've said that if that can be done in a way that does not add cost to the system, we would be more than happy to examine it. This committee has been set up with a fairly tight time frame to do that and I understand has had its first meeting just this week.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate your response. As you know, my caucus's position with respect to the Swimmer report has been that we will accept whatever recommendations come forward that are the best deal for the taxpayers of Ontario. It was an issue we pursued vigorously with your predecessor, Ms Lankin, and I think we eventually got her around to that way of thinking. I am pleased with your remarks in respect to getting the best deal possible for the taxpayers.

There are a number of concerns out there with respect to the deinsuring of medically necessary and currently medically insured services under OHIP. One of them, among many, is laser treatments for the removal of port wine stains. I want to show committee members a picture of a young lady who was born with a rather large port wine stain to the facial area and to read briefly part of the letter that was sent to you, minister, in a letter dated September 9 and copied to myself and my colleague, Mr Don Cousens.

It reads: "I am writing to you at this time concerning laser treatments for port wine stain not to be covered under our Ontario health plan. With this in mind, I need your help. I understand that this is being considered for port wine stain, with it falling under cosmetic. Port wine stain is not cosmetic, it is medical, and should not fall under cosmetic."

She goes on to describe some of the comments she receives from people who come into contact with her little girl. The questions she encounters every day are: "What is wrong with her? Did you burn her? Did you leave her in the sun?" or, in the winter, "Is she frost-bitten?"

She goes on to say, "I've been in the hospital and someone started screaming, 'What is wrong with her?'" She says in her letter that patients are always telling their kids not to come near her child because they do not know what is wrong with her. She states that her child is too young to realize what people are saying about her or why they are staring, "but when she does, it is going to be very devastating for her. Please help

me in avoiding this situation." She goes on to describe the pictures.

I think the important part of the letter is that the mother indicates that with the ongoing treatments the child is receiving—the latter part of the portfolio shows remarkable progress in removal of the port wine stain; you can see in the later pictures that the little girl is quite a bit older and that the stain is probably 50% or 60% lighter than it was—eventually this stain will be removed almost totally.

Minister, before I ask you the question, I also have a letter that was forwarded to me by my colleague Bill Murdoch from a constituent in his riding. It's a young lady who's 18 years of age. She says:

"I would like to bring to your attention a large concern of mine. The Hospital for Sick Kids in Toronto is currently giving laser treatments to children with birthmarks (port wine stains), to gradually lighten until removing these marks. The procedure takes very little time and, according to my doctor, requires a trivial amount of money. However, this program is to be shut down by our government because of cost-cutting. I'm in midtreatment of this procedure and am finding the results very pleasing. Unfortunately, midtreatment is likely where I will remain.

"What the government does not understand is how this treatment benefits children who would never have to face the cruelty and isolation of being slightly different in our society. It is simple surgery, no more meaningful than having a wart removed or a tooth pulled, but it is a procedure that will save a child needless emotional pain. I know from experience that children and some adults can be exceedingly heartless and would like to ask you to do something for this program of small yet massive importance to children such as I. Why should a child feel judged when something can easily be done to prevent that?"

Secondly, it's been pointed out to me by my colleague Mrs Marland that in cases where the port wine stain may encompass a large surface area of the body, indeed those cells grow faster than other skin cells, and physical deterioration does occur.

Are you going to delist the removal of port wine stains?

1730

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me make it very clear. No, port wine stains for children are not something I'm considering delisting. When a list of potential delistings of procedures that were seen as being cosmetic as opposed to directly health-related was released earlier this year, there was enormous concern raised about that, and as a result of our negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association, a process was put in place for trying to look at what procedures should be delisted.

As part of that, the Ontario Medical Association,



which wants very much to be involved in all of these discussions, agreed to suggest, from its point of view, some procedures it thought should be delisted, and the ministry to propose, from our point of view, some that we felt ought no longer to be covered by the insurance plan. Those discussions are ongoing and there will be some public participation in those discussions, and I'm very pleased about that. It's the first time these kinds of decisions have ever been made with the public having an opportunity to participate and to play some role in deciding what they believe our collective insurance system should pay for. But certainly as part of proposals that the ministry has put forward, the delisting of the treatment of port wine stains for children is not one of them.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** For children. Then up to what age is the laser treatment allowed?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No firm conclusions have been reached—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Well, it sounds like a fairly firm conclusion.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** —and no decisions have been made. I'm merely indicating to you that with respect to the list of procedures that could be considered that the ministry has put forward, the delisting of this with respect to children is not one of them.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Minister, I want to ask you about a matter over which our caucus—and I'm sure it's the same with all the caucuses—has received hundreds of letters from across the province, dealing with the subject of in vitro fertilization. You and I are the only people sitting in this room today who have been elected going back to 1985, and both you and I can remember your passion in opposition, as the New Democratic Party, about the subject of equal access to health care in this province. We are concerned about the discussion that perhaps in vitro fertilization and fertility clinic programs as a whole may be delisted and may not be accessible through OHIP insurance for the couples in this province who need that particular treatment.

I think it's very important to realize that when we talk about infertility we're talking about a medical condition. It's the same as any other medical condition. It's a problem. It's very, very serious for young couples who wish to have children and are not able to without that help. In the meantime, if there is a risk of that service being deinsured and these couples continue to fund services of other categories through their taxes, it's a tremendous double standard here and a horrible irony. Through their taxes, of course, they're funding other health services, from abortion through maternity services all the way to sterilization.

I'm very concerned about the fact that you're even considering delisting this particular service. In fact,

what you would be doing, if you were to go through with it, is creating the very thing you have argued passionately against, which is a two-tiered medical system: The couples who can afford it will have access to it; the couples who can't afford it will not have access to it. You're certainly gung-ho on abortion services in this province, across the entire province, and I cannot see how you could possibly ever defend funding abortion services and not funding infertility clinics with whatever is needed, in vitro fertilization as part of that treatment.

I want to ask you directly, will you assure these families that you will not discriminate against them in the future and that you will continue to have in vitro fertilization as an insured service in Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say to the member that I certainly know the strength of the views of people who believe that this is a process that they want to take advantage of. I would point out to her that Ontario is the only province where it is now an insured service. I don't know whether she has discussed this with, for example, Premier Filmon or Premier Kline and other provinces where it is not seen as being an essential service.

I have to say to you that I have some concerns about the process, and I await with interest the report of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technology, which I understand will be out next month, because the treatment of infertility occurs in a number of different ways, in vitro fertilization being one. There have been some recent studies that indicate that perhaps the chances of conceiving with that kind of treatment as opposed to some more conventional treatments are not that greatly different and that the side-effects are things that have yet to be evaluated.

In coming to a conclusion as to whether or not this is a medically necessary procedure and one that should be covered by our insurance plan, I want to have some more discussion and am not in a position to give you a categorical confirmation today.

**Mrs Marland:** Is there any relationship between the fact that the deputy comes from other provinces where this is not an insured service? I wonder.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think that's really a most unacceptable comment, Mr Chair, and I'm sure it's not one that the member genuinely wants to make.

**Mrs Marland:** Would you agree that infertility is a medical condition, minister?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I am not a doctor and do not practise medicine, nor do I intend to. I accept advice and I listen with care to advice from all sides on all issues and come to some conclusion.

**Mrs Marland:** Therefore, you can't talk about side-effects of a procedure you know nothing about, which is what you just said.



**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was merely relating the fact that there are very significantly different points of view around this particular procedure.

**Mr Donald Abel (Wentworth North):** You're way out of line, Margaret.

**Mrs Marland:** And it's okay to fund abortion clinics?

**Mr Abel:** Are you against abortion clinics?

**Mrs Marland:** I'm asking if it's okay to fund one side of reproduction and not another.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mrs Marland, could you address your question to the minister.

**Mrs Marland:** I'm handing it back to our Health critic.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** There's a great deal of concern around the province regarding the government's approach to psychiatric services. Community Mental Health Services in Collingwood, in my riding, has written to your ministry and expressed its deep concerns about your government's psychiatric sessional fee reduction, which is part of your expenditure control exercise.

I want to quote from a letter dated September 15 from Mr Eric Sutton, manager of Community Mental Health Services in Collingwood. The letter was addressed to Ms Jessica Hill at the community mental health branch of your ministry. Mr Sutton writes:

"Not only does the announcement of cuts retroactive to April 1, 1993, put us in a difficult financial situation this year, but the possibility of inadequate psychiatric support is a threat to the viability of our operation. Already, we have had a resignation from the consulting psychiatrist to our psychogeriatric program, Dr Stephen Kiraly, over this program.

"We are a small team, five mental health professionals working with the support of a psychiatrist clinical director and two other consulting psychiatrists. Although we are a small team, we process 800 referrals from the community each year. Of the approximately 175 people active on our case loads, 60% of them suffer from schizophrenic-like illness, an organic brain disorder or a major affective disorder. We contend with these kinds of numbers and acuity level only because we have solid psychiatrist availability and consultation opportunities. We can be much more than a counselling service and meet the needs of the community because of this level of psychiatric support.

"In this time of mental health reform planning, when more money is supposed to be going from institutions to the community, this cut of 25% in psychiatrist availability is a move in the opposite direction. This plan may well threaten the ability of many programs to help the seriously mentally ill. I would urge you to reconsider."

What Mr Sutton has said, it seems to me, flies in the face of your mental health reform strategy as outlined in the document entitled Putting People First, which says in part, "As far as possible, enabling people with mental health problems to remain in the community, using hospitalization only when clinically necessary."

The 25% reduction in psychiatric sessional fees, which in fact will be a 50% reduction in year one because of the retroactivity, I think will serve to undermine your goal of deinstitutionalization in the mental health care sector. Could I have your comments on that with specific reference to the Collingwood situation?

1740

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I can't address the specific reference to Collingwood because I'm afraid I don't have the details on that. I acknowledge that in fact we did reduce the sessional fees, but I take issue with the member characterizing that as concern about our mental health reform policies, because of all of the initiatives we've taken and the actions we have started, I think the level of acceptance and approbation of our mental health reform policy has been the greatest. We now have a clear policy framework to guide reform, and the member is right: it is consumer-oriented and community-focused. The organizations that provide the kind of counselling and support, the families of people who are diagnosed with schizophrenia, the community-based counselling, the survivor organizations, are all very accepting and very supportive of the direction that we are going.

The reduction in sessional fees was part of our budget constraint program. I would point out to him that most of those fees are paid to hospitals and to people who practice out of hospitals; who practice sometimes with community groups but who are essentially not the kind of community-based services which the Graham report and the Canadian Mental Health Association and all of the grass-roots community organizations over the years have called for. We have a provincial advisory committee on mental health reform which has been chaired by Glenn Thompson, a former deputy minister and official of the Canadian Mental Health Association who has been working with my ministry in moving to implement the reforms as a special adviser.

While I met some months ago certainly with representatives of the psychiatrists who were concerned about the reductions in the sessional fees and what it meant to their income, with respect to the implementation of the reform, as I say, my sense is that it has been well received, welcomed, and the district health councils and the psychiatric hospitals are working towards integrating their long-term plans so that we can at last have a comprehensive community-based mental health system in the province.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** But with respect to the reform, I think I would agree that the theory of the mental health

reform has been well received by district health councils and stakeholders. None the less, with the onslaught of cuts in the sessional fees, the expenditure control plan and the social contract, we're seeing a reduction of services at the community level. Mr Sutton points out in his letter that they've already lost one professional who was part of the team there and it's a reduction of services to the people. So on one hand you talk about deinstitutionalization, you talk about reform, but the reality out there is that there's actually less service for people in their own communities.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Again I would disagree that that fact the reality. I was able to indicate to a meeting of some OPSEU workers from psychiatric hospitals a couple of weeks ago that as part of our reinvestment of some of the savings from the institutions, we will have an additional \$5 million to allocate to many of the community-based programs. I believe the beginning of implementation of mental health reform is reflecting the needs that are actually being identified in communities and through the long-term plans that have been done.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I want to read from a letter that was faxed within the last day to the leader of the Ontario PC Party, Mike Harris, from Patricia George, who's founder of the Heart and Lung Patients Support Services of Ontario. Mrs George is very anxious for you to hear at first hand her concerns regarding your handling of the cuts to the Ontario drug benefit program.

"I am writing to you on behalf of all of the senior citizens of Ontario. They are very disgusted with Health minister Ruth Grier and all who are involved with the seniors' drugs being cut, especially when it comes to heart and lung medication. Our phones are ringing from all across Ontario asking us to help them to pay for their medication that they have to have. Most of these seniors are 60 and over and they just cannot make ends meet. Some of this medication that they take ranges from \$100 to \$300. Besides paying for their medication, they have rent and food. It is beginning to look like they either pay for their medication and do without food and a roof over their head, or they buy food and pay their rent and do not take their medication and if they are lucky, will end up in the hospital, with the government having to pay.

"I would like for you to address this concern to Ms Ruth Grier and ask her, does she not have a heart when it comes to seniors? How can anyone treat them like this? What in the hell is this country we call Canada coming to when we can always help other countries, but we cannot even help our own people? Every time you turn around it is the seniors who are getting the shaft. This is not right and we, the above organization, will fight and fight for these people."

She mentions that she sent you a letter along the same lines dated September 15, and has not yet received a response.

"When are we going to have a Health minister that is going to show they care and show respect for the seniors and not dig a hole for them to crawl into?"

She goes on, again pleading with Mike Harris to bring this to your attention. Minister, do you have any comments with respect to Ms George's letter?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I certainly hope that Mr Harris in his reply will point out the actions this government has taken with respect to assistance to seniors, whether it be in health care, whether it be in housing, whether it be in a range of other activities, and will point out that, for example, long-term care, which we've been discussing here, is moving to action, something that other governments have only talked about for lo, these many years.

I'm sure Mr Harris will also point out to her that Ontario is the only province where drugs are currently available with no charge to anybody over 65, regardless of their income. As the member will know, in looking at how we can reform our drug program and extend that eligibility to perhaps people with catastrophic illnesses or families of the working poor, we have considered whether one way to do that is to impose some kind of user fee on those who can afford it and who may have hitherto not had to contribute to the cost of those drugs.

That is something that is under consideration, something on which broad public consultation ended at the end of September. The response has been, as the member might expect, with those who currently benefit from our program indicating that they don't see any need to change and those who have not been so fortunate and have in fact enormous costs of drugs, partially because of the federal government's actions in supporting Bill C-91, which increased the cost of generic drugs to seniors all across this country and not only in Ontario, some people saying, "We wish we had access to your drug program."

The changes that we have made with respect to changes in the formulary are based on the expert advice of the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee, which looks at the medications from the point of view of what is the most cost-effective and does not recommend the removal from the list of any drug for which an alternative is not available or for which they do not believe a very cost-effective alternative can be obtained, either through changes in diet or over the counter.

So the concerns that your constituent has written about are in anticipation of changes to the drug system that are yet to be made and lack recognition of the very real reforms and progress that have been made in this province in providing security and secure health care to seniors.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister. We now turn to the New Democrat caucus. Ms Haeck.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Madam Minister, I appreciate your coming before us. I



have written a letter to you as well as to previous ministers of Health with regard to a psychiatric service problem in our area.

St Catharines falls under the umbrella of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital. Geographically we make up about 30% of their catchment area, but we receive only about 11% of service in return. I have talked to our district health council, so I have some sense of what the problem is. The concern I have is that we really do lack a range of follow-up services for psychiatric patients who have been released from Hamilton Psychiatric.

1750

There is one group that at this time is being funded by the United Way, which is the CMHA facility, actually very close to where I live. They are right now under a severe threat of being cut back because, as many other institutions are, the United Way is seriously looking at how it is funding a range of agencies. This particular agency would like to, as many other sort of drop-in centres—what they would like to establish are funded through the community mental health branch.

This may be just an anomaly, but it is one that exists, that they are having great difficulty in making their case heard for at least getting some recognition of the problem and hopefully at some point some funding. So I'd like to again advocate on their behalf to see about getting their drop-in centre so some of our ex-psychiatric patients can in fact get the kind of care they need.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Miss Haeck has done an admirable job of drawing to my attention the fact that the peninsula, because it is often lumped in for statistical purposes with the Hamilton-Wentworth region, is underserved and lacks facilities. I want to assure her and her constituents that, yes, that picture has been drawn for me, I understand it, and as we review the plans the district health councils will be drawing up in terms of mental health services, I will certainly keep it in mind.

There is more money for community mental health, as I indicated in response to a question from, I think, Mr Wilson. Part of the savings that we have identified from within the psychiatric institutions will be reinvested in community support programs. I'll be happy to look into the specific one that you raise and see what its status is.

**Ms Haeck:** I thank you, Minister, because, living downtown and having worked downtown for many years in St Catharines, we do see a lot of the ex-psychiatric patients. It's something that they truly need to have available to them.

**Mr Bisson:** I was going through some documents I had asked for from legislative research on something going on at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre in terms of cost-of-care statements. I don't know if you're aware of that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** As to what?

**Mr Bisson:** Cost-of-care statements. We had a discussion about a year ago with a number of people in our community about the issue of health care and trying to contain costs. One of the big things to come out of it—surprise, surprise—is that many people, although they understand we spend a lot of money in health care, don't understand how much it really costs per individual going to a hospital emergency department etc.

Sunnybrook has for a while, through the health science centre, been doing cost-of-care statements, and I'm wondering if the minister could respond as to what the possibility is to take a look at what they've been doing there. Is that really something that's feasible to extend to the rest of the province so people understand how much health care actually is?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** This is something which shortly after I became minister I expressed a very real interest in, and I was excited to find that Sunnybrook had been doing a pilot project to have a look at that. I think it is an opportunity for us to assist people to understand more about the system and about what the costs that are incurred are. I will certainly, as we look at revamping the health card system and how we can make sure that we verify expenditures, look at this as an opportunity to do that. I see it as an opportunity both for us to have a better control on the system, perhaps, but also to enable patients to understand what happens.

I continually cite the case of a doctor I was told about who frequently visited a senior citizens' building, went down the corridor knocking on apartment doors and saying, "Hello, Mr Jones. How are you feeling today? Hello, Miss Smith. I hope you're well," and then, they suspected, billed OHIP for a house call.

If those particular people got a statement of cost and realized that at the end of a quarter or the end of a year, "There were 12 house calls? I don't remember that," and begin to hold that particular physician to account, that's one of the ways that we can make sure we have a more effectively managed system. So I'm very interested in pursuing that and I can assure you that I will.

**Mr Bisson:** Just something following up: The only thing I would add to that is that one of the things that struck me with what they're doing at health science centres is they're giving a cost-of-care statement but they're not including physicians' billing in that. Given that a lot of money we spend is on actual doctors' care, I'm just wondering why that's not in the statement.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** This is a project that Sunnybrook centre is doing, so it's the cost of care to them. The doctors' fees would come in through part of the OHIP system, and so Sunnybrook would not have that. As we look at the system in a more comprehensive way, then I want to see what kind of technology we need to be able to do a total cost of care.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm just wondering if the Chair needs a



motion in order to consider the estimates concluded.

**The Vice-Chair:** I do.

**Mr Bisson:** I would make a motion that we consider the estimates of the Ministry of Health as being concluded at this point.

**The Vice-Chair:** All in favour?

**Mr Abel:** I'll second that.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Chairman, do we get discussion on that motion?

**The Vice-Chair:** We have about five minutes left to go, Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** My understanding is that both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party are still owed time in this process and that we're not constrained by 6 o'clock.

**Mr Larry O'Connor (Durham-York):** Can I speak to that?

**The Vice-Chair:** Just a second. It's my understanding that we were to conclude at 6 o'clock.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** On whose agreement, Mr Chair?

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr O'Connor.

**Mr O'Connor:** Maybe if I could shed a little bit of light on this. I did have a discussion with the other Chair before he had to leave us and was assured that both opposition parties would get their full time allotment. In fact, to enable them to get their full time allotment, the government caucus limited itself so that they would have their share of time. So at this time everyone's received their share of time other than the government caucus, which hasn't received its share of time but in the wish of trying to proceed in an orderly fashion has conceded that time over at this point.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That was my understanding, Mr Chair, from Mr Jackson. I very much appreciate my colleagues making that sacrifice.

**The Vice-Chair:** Perhaps this might provide some additional clarification: It was my understanding that the Liberals were to receive 55 minutes approximately, which they did; the Conservatives 55 minutes, which they did; the New Democrats 30 minutes this afternoon, which they did.

**Mrs Sullivan:** There was certainly understanding that the New Democrats had agreed to move back from time. I think the misunderstanding arose in that the opposition parties thought that we had another 25 minutes left each. So when the totals were shown to us on the paper they were probably a total that didn't include an extra 25 minutes, because I was prepared for another round of questioning of about 25 minutes. But if the time is not short 50 minutes, then we'd better vote.

**The Vice-Chair:** Yes. The time has expired and the opposition caucuses have had the requisite amount of time.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Could I ask you to vote on my estimates before we leave?

**The Vice-Chair:** This now completes the time allocated by agreement to complete the Ministry of Health estimates for 1993-94. Shall vote 1601—

**Mrs Marland:** Can we have a recorded vote?

**The Vice-Chair:** A recorded vote? Shall vote 1601 carry? All in favour?

**Ayes**

Abel, Bisson, Haeck, Hayes, O'Connor, Wessenger.

**The Vice-Chair:** Opposed?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Sorry. Which number again?

**The Vice-Chair:** Vote 1601. Opposed?

**Mr Abel:** Are you sure you want a recorded vote on this?

**The Vice-Chair:** We're having a recorded vote.

**Mrs Marland:** Mr Chairman, I'm not subbed into the committee, so I can't make that request.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Marland:** Well, look: I'm being very honest.

**The Vice-Chair:** We're in the midst of vote, Mrs Marland. Opposed?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Point of order, Mr Chair: The member has indicated that she is not subbed in on the committee and she has asked for a recorded vote that in fact she was not eligible to request when those of us who are on the committee—I don't know if I can speak for my colleague, but I do not require a recorded vote on every section. But the member—

**The Vice-Chair:** On this vote we're having a recorded vote.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Okay.

**The Vice-Chair:** We're in the midst of a recorded vote on this vote. Vote 1601, opposed?

**Nays**

Wilson (Simcoe West).

**The Vice-Chair:** Carried.

Shall vote 1602 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 1603 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 1604 carry? Carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Health be approved? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the Ministry of Health estimates be reported to the House? Carried.

This meeting stands adjourned until tomorrow when we will consider the Ministry of Labour estimates at 3:30.

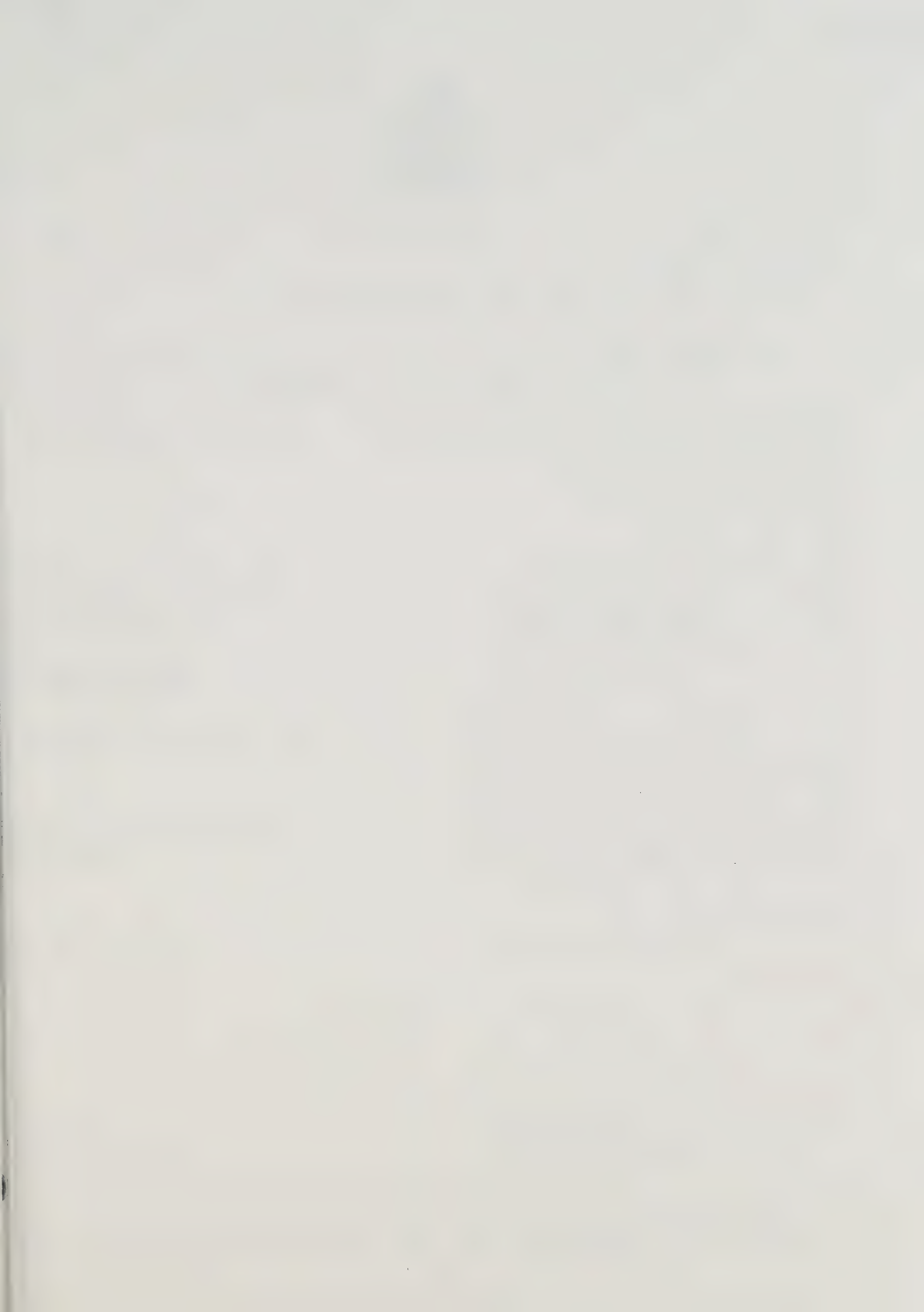
**Hon Mrs Grier:** Thank you, Mr Chair, and thank you, committee members.

The committee adjourned at 1800.









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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

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Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

\*Haeck, Christel (St Catharines-Brock ND)

\*Hayes, Pat (Essex-Kent ND)

Lessard, Wayne (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

O'Connor, Larry (Durham-York ND) for Mr Lessard

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Elston

Wessenger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Wiseman

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Carr

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Bradley, James J. (St Catharines L)

Marland, Margaret (Mississauga South/-Sud PC)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

CA7013  
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Government  
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E-13

E-13

ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 6 October 1993**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 6 octobre 1993**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

**Ministry of Labour**

**Ministère du Travail**



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum





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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 6 October 1993

The committee met at 1536 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF LABOUR

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I call to order the standing committee of estimates. I'd like to welcome the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Bob Mackenzie. The committee has requested and the House has concurred with five hours of hearings for the estimates of the Ministry of Labour. In accordance with our standing rules, I'll invite the minister to begin his opening comments of up to 30 minutes and he might, at the outset, introduce his deputy. Welcome, Minister.

**Hon Bob Mackenzie (Minister of Labour):** Thank you very much. First, Jim Thomas, whom most of you probably know, is the Deputy Minister of Labour, and there are some other Ministry of Labour staff here. Jim, if you'd just go through their names quickly, and their positions, we may want to use them if we don't have all the answers.

**Mr James R. Thomas:** Sure. Why don't I just ask the staff at the back to introduce themselves?

**The Chair:** Deputy, they won't be picked up on Hansard, but perhaps you can just read it into the record.

**Mr Thomas:** Thea Herman is the assistant deputy minister of policy. Adam Starkman is in the policy branch. Peter Inokai and Gerry Stuart, behind him, are in the finance branch. Donna Brown is from human resources. Carola Lane is the ADM of corporate services, and behind them is Paul Gardner, who is the director of mediation in labour management services. Lorraine Carroll is also here, from the minister's office.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Mr Chair and members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity as the Labour minister to review with you the major operating and financial issues facing my ministry.

Speaking personally, my three years so far as the Labour minister have been both interesting and challenging. The working world is being swept by breath-taking changes on a scope not seen since the 1930s.

In Ontario, all of us—government, employers and workers—are struggling to make sense of these changes in planning for future prosperity. While many questions remain to be answered, it is clear that increased labour-management cooperation is going to be the key to that prosperity.

We believe that when you have workers who are fully involved and committed in workplace decisions, you have better workplaces, and better workplaces are invariably more productive workplaces.

Since our election in the fall of 1990, we've been putting that belief in better workplaces into practice. The Labour ministry has become the vehicle for a large part of the government's progressive agenda, a fact of which I am proud.

We have already passed major amendments to several ministry acts and there is further legislation pending. We've strengthened and expanded the Pay Equity Act of 1987, bringing the benefits of pay equity to another 420,000 working women in the broader public sector.

We've established the most comprehensive employee wage protection program in North America. As of this morning, we've paid out more than \$113 million to over 48,000 workers since the program's inception in the fall of 1991. Those are the up-to-date figures as of this morning. This amount is a fraction of the total wages, vacation pay, severance and termination pay owed to these workers by their employers, but the point has been made that working people must be treated fairly.

Occupational health and safety remains central to our role as a ministry. The strengthened Occupational Health and Safety Act has made a new era in workplace health and safety. Gone is much of the adversarial relationship so often present between management and labour. Both parties are now coequals when it comes to health and safety matters.

Fatalities and accidents are still too high, but they are declining. We've continued to put pressure on wayward employers to conform with the new act. Prosecutions and fines are increasing, and we are finding that they are having a deterrent effect.

The Workplace Health and Safety Agency has launched its certification training program for labour and management representatives on the joint safety committees in each workplace, and the agency is acting as an educational and informational link for health and safety across the province.

The provisions of Bill 208 call for a mandatory review of the agency beginning in January 1994. The terms and conditions of this review are at this moment being finalized, and it will commence on schedule.

Members will also remember Bill 40, our package of amendments to the Labour Relations Act. The bill became law on January 1 of this year and we are tracking its impact with great interest.

Labour and management are especially pleased with the one-day turnaround on construction industry jurisdictional disputes, and the board has made several interim orders which have enabled it to respond quickly and effectively to some serious complaints. So far there

have been 65 applications to the board for consolidation of bargaining units from both employers and staff. In the nine months since the bill became law certifications are up somewhat, although it is still too early to determine a trend.

The board's field staff has been successful about 80% of the time in helping to settle differences between labour and management without the necessity of formal litigation before the board.

All in all, it would appear that the implementation of Bill 40 is proceeding a lot more smoothly than its passage, and I think we're all thankful for that.

Turning to the ministry's legislative agenda for the rest of the fiscal year, we have several bills before the House.

Our amendments to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, otherwise known as CECBA, received first reading last June. Both the public service unions and the government have longed desired reform of this important statute, which governs labour relations for almost 100,000 working men and women in the Ontario public service and its affiliated agencies. Compared with the Labour Relations Act and labour laws in many other provinces, CECBA is a restrictive and outdated piece of labour legislation.

We're proposing to broaden access to collective bargaining for excluded classifications, allow classification grievances and lessen the reliance on binding arbitration by requiring the mutual consent of both parties beforehand. Lastly, we propose to remove crown agencies from CECBA's jurisdiction and place them under the Labour Relations Act.

The public service will also have the right to strike, but it will be contingent on both parties' prior agreement on essential service designations. The public can be assured that essential public services will always be protected in the event of a strike or lockout.

Our CECBA proposals will give working men and women in the public sector rights and opportunities they have requested for many years. They will allow the government to conduct its labour relations in a system that is fairer, less cumbersome and certainly less expensive.

The government's final major piece of worker reform legislation is also before the House. The agricultural labour relations bill will establish, for the first time ever, a system of labour relations in the province's agricultural and horticultural sectors.

Together with farm owners and farm workers, we have developed a package of proposals that is agreeable to all parties. Workers will gain rights and benefits they have long been denied, farm owners will be protected against work stoppages and there will be virtually no impact on the family farm. The bill is an important achievement. It's proof that reasonable, progressive

labour law reform is possible when all parties approach the issue in good faith and partnership.

Before concluding this morning with a look at some important internal changes that have taken place in the ministry, I'd like to give members of the committee an update on the Workers' Compensation Board.

It seems there is no shortage of opinions or ideas for reform at the board. In fact, it's hard to think of an agency that has been the subject of more formal public inquiry and scrutiny. As the Labour minister, I am the first to concede that the board is facing some real pressures, and nobody is underestimating those pressures. In the midst of these pressures, however, the pace of positive change and achievement continues to pick up steam.

Just last month, the operations of the board were the subject of a week-long review at the standing committee on government agencies. The chair and vice-chair made detailed presentations summarizing actions the board is taking to contain costs, improve service and get workers back on the job as soon as possible.

As well, ministry and board officials are already working to comply with the recommendations made in the recent Provincial Auditor's report concerning the board. Members will also know that the Premier has asked the Premier's Labour-Management Advisory Committee for its help in guiding the government and the board on an agenda for workers' compensation reform.

In particular, the Premier has asked this group of business and labour leaders to undertake their work without any preconceived notions of what that reform should entail. This, I think, is a necessary first step to developing a compensation system that is, above all, less adversarial. These are just a few developments that perhaps have been lost in the general noise and clamour regarding the board.

Our government remains committed to the principle of fair and just compensation for workplace injuries and occupational illnesses. That commitment means working through rough patches with the board, supporting its agenda for reform and, above all, taking the message to every workplace that injuries can be prevented in the first place.

I began my remarks today by commenting on the incredible changes that have occurred in Ontario workplaces as a result of the recession and restructuring. That comment can apply equally to the public sector as well. With one million employees and a huge payroll, the broader public sector is a major player in the Ontario economy. Right now, we're going through the same painful period of readjustment that occurred in the private sector a few years ago.

In the case of the Ministry of Labour, that has meant re-examining the way we provide services to our clients,



the workers and employers of Ontario. The result has been some major changes and I think improvements in the ministry's relations with clients and its own employees. But the situation is far from perfect, as any private sector employer would tell you about workplace conditions in the last few years.

We faced sizeable budget pressures this year that led to severe constraints, layoffs and a general lowering of employee morale. The total impact of all government restraint programs, the multi-year expenditure reduction plan, MYERP, the executive compensation plan, ECP, and other required operating reductions on the ministry's budget this year will amount to \$43.4 million.

As a result, we have reduced our transfer payments by \$17.7 million and our operating base by the balance, \$25.7 million. This represents a decrease of 18% of our base resources and we face further MYERP reductions in each of the next two years.

Our situation was compounded by the fact that we did not have a great deal of leeway in implementing these mandated cuts to avoid internal layoffs. Some ministries were able to apply the bulk of their cuts to transfer payments, thus avoiding the need to lay off their own employees. Because transfer payments are a much smaller percentage of our base budget, that is an option we did not enjoy.

After exhausting all other avenues, we were forced to eliminate 208 positions in the current fiscal year, which, when vacancies and other variables were taken into effect, resulted in actual layoff notices being issued to 113 classified staff.

As the Labour minister I personally regretted having to authorize these cutbacks in personnel, but we are making every effort to redeploy our affected staff elsewhere in the public service. Of the original 113 who I said received notices, 63 have either been redeployed elsewhere in the public service, found new employment outside the government or retired. We will continue to work hard to place the remaining 50 affected staff who want to continue their careers in the Ontario government.

1550

The ministry's reorganization has successfully served a short-term desire to better meet the needs of our clients. Over the long term, however, the Ministry of Labour faces some major questions about how it should best go about meeting its mandate of promoting better workplaces and fairer workplace practices.

Given the pace of change in the workplace today, we need to know if our programs and approaches in such diverse workplaces as occupational health and safety, employment practices, labour relations and policy development are the most efficient way to achieve the results I think we are all seeking. Conversely, we need to know from those we serve and those agencies also

involved in workplace issues their ideas on the most productive ways to deliver services.

Certain features of the ministry are indispensable to its mandate, our enforcement powers for one. I can't imagine a situation where we would surrender the power to bring wayward employers into line, especially in life-and-death health and safety situations. We'll continue to need professional and trained staff to carry out inspections and assess individual situations. There are other areas of our operations, though, which may not be as relevant to our future role. It's these areas we want to clarify.

As a result, we are about to enter with our stakeholders and our own staff a discussion on the ministry's future role. It will be a very important exercise and it could result in some major changes in the way we go about business.

As a point of departure we have recently widely distributed a discussion paper entitled Strategic Directions. This document is one of the tangible fruits of the new working relationship within the ministry in that it was developed in close consultation with representatives of our bargaining unit employees. The paper is a provocative and interesting document intended to focus the consultation phase now under way with our staff and our clients. The feedback we receive this fall will help determine the ministry's general direction and core operations in the coming years.

As Ontario's first New Democratic Minister of Labour I remain committed to fair and progressive workplace standards. These days, we are told that such standards are incompatible with the lean and mean global marketplace. We're told that we must give up almost all we have worked for and strived for in order to remain competitive. Our government disagrees. I think one of the reasons we have been so successful in bringing forth fair and reasonable workplace reform is because we have worked extra hard to balance the need of both employers and workers. We have a number of forums now where business can gain input to policy development at the ministry in its earliest stages. I am confident that the business community will continue to take full advantage of these opportunities to make its views known.

In the critical years ahead, our economy will continue to be seriously tested and the Ministry of Labour stands ready to continue helping labour and management meet this test and usher in a new wave of prosperity for worker and employer alike. I want to thank you very much for your hearing and attention here today.

**The Chair:** Did you have any additional comments? If not, we'll proceed with the rotation.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think we'll proceed with the rotation.

**The Chair:** Very good. Mr Mahoney.

**Mr Steven W. Mahoney (Mississauga West):** I think I'll just ask a series of questions rather than wasting your time and giving my viewpoint on some of your comments, because you probably would expect we wouldn't agree on much of that. So I think much more the purpose here from my perspective would be to get some questions as to some of the things that are going on.

First of all, I don't know if there's a document out. You used the term "stakeholders." Could you give me a list of whom the ministry consider to be the stakeholders, either broadly or specifically? Either way I'm happy.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I should say, just before Jim responds, that there is consultation with the stakeholders in all the various areas of the ministry when we're looking at legislation. Jim can better outline—

**Mr Mahoney:** Yes, I just want to know who they are specifically, who you would include in your definition of the Labour ministry's stakeholders.

**Mr Thomas:** I would say that our stakeholders consist of a variety of people, organizations. I would certainly think that it is workers; it is organized labour; it is employer associations; it is employers; it is academia; it is a variety of people who come across our doorstep; and it is other kinds of interest groups, community groups. Those were the kinds of stakeholders that we think of when we, for example, organized policy advisory groups into three sections and I think we have a very effective consultation process whereby on a regular basis, every two or three months, we invite the community groups in to talk to us about what they think we're doing right and doing wrong and what our policies should be and where we should be going in certain areas. Similarly, we do the same thing with unions and employers and employer associations.

**Mr Mahoney:** How do you develop a mechanism to get input to the ministry to—for example, over 60% of the workers whom you mention would be non-union workers. How do you get any assurance that those people whom you've listed as stakeholders would have input into things and that it wouldn't be dominated by big unions or big employers?

There could be a criticism of things like a Premier's Council, for example, being dominated by General Motors and not taking into account small business or people who are unorganized. The same fear could be expressed about labour being dominated by steel or by auto; that type of thing. How do you actively go out and involve people in unorganized labour?

**Mr Thomas:** Well, you're right; it's really hard to engage a consultation process that captures the opinions of four million workers or 300,000 workplaces. So that's definitely a challenge that I think both employers and workers and unions face.

On the Premier's labour-management group, for instance, very clearly I think the business leaders that you're talking about recognized that and set in place a fairly sophisticated process of involving as best they could employer associations, other employers. I know they've got something in the order of 14 working groups looking at various issues within workers' compensation reform. There is a steering committee consisting of 16 or 18 people. But would they say that they represent all 300,000 or even a large portion of those employers in the province of Ontario? I don't know; you'd have to ask them. I'd be surprised if they would claim to be totally representative.

Organized labour, for example, has worked very hard and has recommended as part of the way they would want to approach workers' compensation governance—as well as the Ontario Federation of Labour representing organized labour, they also feel that they need to be involving the networks of injured workers. So they, for example, have set up a process whereby as part of their consultation they engage the Ontario network of injured workers.

I don't know that similar situations exist in the non-workers' compensation community, so I think the challenge of trying to get the inputs from the unrepresented in terms of organized labour is a very real challenge. It's a challenge that's been around for a very long time and will continue to be around.

**Mr Mahoney:** Jim, the minister referred to better relations between labour and management in the province. Of course, we hear different information from people who contact us. Are you familiar with the task force on work organization service that's been ongoing?

**Mr Thomas:** Yes.

1600

**Mr Mahoney:** Could you tell me, first of all, how much money has been spent so far by the task force in arriving at the point they're at, and maybe tell me what point they're at? Is it a cabinet submission? What's going on with this task force?

**Mr Thomas:** The task force on the organization of work is a subcommittee of the Premier's Council on Economic Renewal that has been in existence for a bit more than a year and a half, because when I became deputy and found myself on it, it had been around for a few months at that point. It has looked at the ways in which we can achieve higher-performing workplaces. I think that's an oversimplification of what it's been doing, but it's been co-chaired and still is co-chaired by Mr Curlook of Inco and Mr Pomeroy of the Communications and Electrical Workers. Under the leadership of those two people, it has developed a number of products that were presented to the Premier's Council in May of this year.

There was, for example, a vision statement put



forward around what good-performing workplaces would look like. There was a document to help organizations and companies assess where they are on the continuum of organizational change. There was a strong cry from the task force for there to be some kind of ongoing institution or organization or way of disseminating information to the workplaces that haven't yet become higher-performing workplaces, which, according to the literature, are as many as 80% of the workplaces in the province. So we're talking about a way to improve productivity and effectiveness.

**Mr Mahoney:** We're talking about a committee in every workplace like the health and safety agency committee?

**Mr Thomas:** No, I don't think that's been decided, Mr Mahoney. That was not one of the conclusions that was reached. But when you ask about the cost of it, first of all, I can find that out for you. I don't have the information at my fingertips, but I can say to you that it was an extraordinarily low cost because the 50-plus people who participated from business, from labour, from academia, from consulting and from government did it on a voluntary basis, and so I would think that the cost would be extremely modest.

We in the ministry have taken some of the information from that task force and are out consulting now on whether and how to establish a work organization service. That consultation is concluding and we have not formulated final opinions or recommendations yet, but certainly we are hearing that there's a very strong cry out there, a very strong wish out there, for there to be some mechanism for sharing best practices, for helping people to move to higher-performing workplaces.

No one has suggested at this point that that will be accomplished by having a work organization bipartite committee in every workplace. People haven't said that isn't possible, but all I'm saying is, that has not reached that degree of specificity yet.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think it's probably worth pointing out, too, that we went through, as is obviously knowledge, a fairly difficult period through the process of Bill 40.

One of the arguments that we made from the beginning on that, which was difficult for some people to accept, quite frankly, was that we simply had to find a way, that we tried to shift as much as we could the confrontational approach, which certainly in my experience has been what has built the labour movement in Ontario, to a more cooperative approach. That led immediately to what could be done and where we could get cooperation between both business and labour in terms of workplace practices. So that's—

**Mr Mahoney:** What do you mean, Minister—sorry, but maybe you could help me. What do you mean by “built the labour movement in the province of Ontario”?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think the development of the labour movement in the province of Ontario was based on confrontation, not based on a cooperative mode of doing business.

**Mr Mahoney:** Do you find that, oh, take the last five or six years, that statement would hold water? Or are you referring to the 1950s and 1960s or even the 1970s? Today, do you find that in most modern industry there's confrontation between labour and management?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think that's been a fact of life and, incidentally, accepted by both sides when you discuss it with them, because we got a lot of comments on it during the Bill 40 hearings—up until very recently. I think the message that's finally sunk in loud and clear to both sides of the issue is that some of the old ways of doing business have got to change.

You still have the distrust, to some extent, between some of the parties as to whether we can operate on a level playing field if we give up on what I have called in some of the hearings, rightly or wrongly, some of the sacred cows in terms of the labour movement; and on the management side whether there's an acceptance that they should be probably going to the workers on the shop floor who, in many cases, have ideas that are very effective in terms of improving productivity or improving their competitive picture in business.

**Mr Thomas:** Could I just make a follow-up comment to that? Over the last couple of years, I think you've seen a shift in many workplaces from the kind of adversarial situation that the minister described as characteristic, perhaps, of workplaces a few years back, recognizing that there is a need to try to find some ways to relate to each other differently. I think one needs to look no further away than the Ontario public service for a good example of that.

When I joined the Ontario public service in 1988 and was responsible for collective bargaining on behalf of the government with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, the relationship was extremely adversarial: We met each other at the bargaining table and we met each other in grievance hearings. In 1993 that situation has moved a long way. We have productivity committees that are working together jointly. The strategic planning document that the minister talked about in the Ministry of Labour was a joint document. We have joint committees on a variety of things and we're trying to find ways to work with each other, and we are finding ways to work with each other, that are very different from the ones that I think characterized the relationship between the government and OPSEU between 1972 and, say, the late 1980s. I think that probably is being reflected in many workplaces in both the public and the private sector.

**Mr Mahoney:** It's interesting that you use the example of the public service, because that would not be the public image out there, that the public service



and the government are pals; far from it, as a result of the many demonstrations and activities we've seen lately. I wonder if there's a difference between working at the staff level, Jim, where you work, versus the political level where the minister works.

**Mr Thomas:** But your question was very much directed at what's happening in the workplaces, and I would argue that my position as deputy minister and my staff is comparable to the management in a corporation. The kinds of things I'm seeing happen in my ministry and that I see happening in government at the staff levels, at the management and union levels, I would think are fairly typical of what's happening in the private sector. Whether or not this particular government is having a particularly difficult time with unions on a political level is a different question.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I won't delay this, but Jim referred to the public sector. I want to give you some observations that have been made in the private sector in an area that I know and you at least have some awareness of as well: the situation at Stelco, which, I am well aware, for years has been one of real difficulty and real confrontation. I've had comments at meetings I've been at within the last six months from the president and several executive members of the local at Stelco that—I don't want to give the impression that all is sweetness and light; they're still two tough parties when it comes to negotiating—there is now an openness and degree of cooperation they have never seen before. I want to tell you clearly that from Sandy Adams and some of the other vice-presidents and officers at Stelco, I've had exactly the same comment made to me, that discussions that just were unthinkable two and three and four years ago between the union and the company are now regular fare. I've had similar comments from GM, and there are a number of examples of this. We don't mean it's all sweetness and light—

**Mr Mahoney:** What do you attribute that to?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think what I started out with: We've reached a stage where there's an understanding—in my opinion at least, and that's why I have no difficulty, in spite of the opposition, in proceeding with Bill 40—where the parties are ready to change the ways they've done business in terms of labour relations in the province of Ontario. I think it's essential for us to try to continue that trend and improve it wherever we can, because I don't think we're going to compete in the world markets today in the situation we have if we're operating from the old confrontational approach.

1610

**Mr Mahoney:** Do I understand, then, that you attribute this new-found harmony between management and labour to Bill 40?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I don't think I would ever be that simplistic, but Bill 40 was the effort to get the two parties together, and the reason they wouldn't get

together in much of the past, not just those parties but many of the parties that were involved in labour-management negotiations and disputes, was that there was not a trust or a belief that they were operating on a—I hate the doggone term—level playing field out there. We had to make sure that both sides understood there was some ability to respond on either side; that the response was probably going to be better, though, if they could do it cooperatively.

**Mr Mahoney:** How much time do I have left?

**The Chair:** Ten more minutes.

**Mr Mahoney:** Can you tell me if it's been decided that there will be 10 employees in whatever agency? I know there's a number of options here for the work organization service project, either an Ontario agency, an external advisory board or some kind of interim arrangement, but I'm told there are going to be 10 people hired on staff to run whatever system is set up. Is that accurate?

**Mr Thomas:** That hasn't been decided yet.

**Mr Mahoney:** There will be full-time staff, though, I assume.

**Mr Thomas:** That hasn't been decided yet.

**Mr Mahoney:** I see. Do you, either one of you, the deputy or the minister, think that part of the mandate or part of the role of the Ministry of Labour is to intervene in business to the point of getting them to sit down and talk to one another? Do we really want to get into—I don't mean to dramatize it—an Orwellian type of situation where we're setting up an agency to try to get workers and management talking to one another in the workplace?

**Mr Thomas:** That's a really good question and that's a question that we don't know the answer to. It's a question that we are consulting on. In the consultations that are taking place this month around strategic planning, we're asking people what role they think the Ministry of Labour should play.

I should indicate that we've been extraordinarily welcome on the labour-management services end of it in the Relationships by Objectives program. There have been over 130 RBO programs, in which business and labour have engaged mediators to come in and help them improve the relationship in the workplaces. That's been applauded. It's been done in the private sector; it's been done in the public sector. It's a successful program.

The question I think we're asking is, how much further, if at all, ought the Ministry of Labour, ought government to go beyond simply responding to invitations? I think you're asking an extraordinarily good question, and it's a question we don't know the answer to. It's a question we're going to be hoping that people out there will give us some answers to.

**Mr Mahoney:** One of my concerns, and I say this

directly to the minister, is that there is a fear that an issue like the work organization service program has not been conducted in a public way. It's not clandestine, but it's certainly not something that has come, or appears will come, to the floor of the Legislature, to a legislative committee such as this, to give an opportunity for people to make presentations to maybe answer those questions.

My opening question to the deputy was, how do you identify the stakeholders? Are people co-opted? We hear every day that people in the Workplace Health and Safety Agency have been co-opted. Well, we hear that, and you hear it from us. We don't dream these things up in the middle of the night. People actually call us and write us and say that's their belief. You can call that noise and clamour, Minister; I call that information and stuff that should be put forward in a public agenda in some way.

On the surface, anything that puts forward good ideas and that generates an opportunity for workers and management to work more closely, in a general sense I think makes sense. I'm concerned, however, that I don't think agencies and interest groups, stakeholders, even unorganized stakeholders, have an opportunity for input into this. I don't know who's driving the agenda. You know there is a constant fear that big organized labour drives the agenda of the current government. Is organized labour driving the agenda?

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** That's not what you said the other day in the Legislature.

**Mr Mahoney:** Well, there is a fear out there that might be happening. When a Tory government is in power, there's a fear that big business is driving the agenda. Those fears are there, and perception is reality in politics.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Mahoney:** I'm sorry; I didn't mean to tease the bears, Mr Chairman.

But I sense either a wandering committee or committees being set up in every workplace to sit around. Who's going to be working if everybody's in committee meetings on health and safety, on employment equity, on work organization service? Are we nest-poking, going around looking for problems here?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think there is a point that should be made here, and I have no hesitation in making it as openly and bluntly as I can. One of the agencies that you folks and others have raised is the health and safety agency. We had a situation there or have a situation there where it was one of the first areas where we tried a genuine bipartite approach. I might tell you that in the last few days, with a large number of people graduating from the course, there are a lot of good comments coming in just over the last few days.

But one of the things we ran into, and probably to be

expected, is that in a bipartite type of approach, where we had an equal number of labour and an equal number of management people, there was a much tighter ship, if you like—I'm not sure that's the expression you use—on the labour side, and most of them who were there knew what they thought were the best training programs and so on. We found a much more divided approach on the management side. That led to some problems, which I personally think have been largely dealt with now. That's something we'll find out over the next few days as things go on.

But there was a recognition, I can tell you as well, very clearly on the management side of what the strength was in terms of trying to set up these new programs on the labour side; that they had to find some way they could get their act together and operating so that they were speaking with a more united, combined voice when they did come up to issues on which they may not have agreed with the labour approach. That's one of the growing pains we've suffered through, operating on a bipartite basis. I can tell you that both sides are very aware of it and, as strange as it may seem, there's an understanding on both sides that they've got to respond to the other side's concerns.

**Mr Mahoney:** People accuse politicians of telling them what they want to hear. I think sometimes the people tell the politicians what they think we want to hear, because we clearly get different messages in relation to health and safety. The bipartite situation does not appear, to a number of groups who have come to us, whether they're groups that have an axe to grind sometimes because they don't want to have their authority or their position taken away or whatever—but clearly there is a strong feeling that labour has more than dominated health and safety, that the management co-chair has been co-opted. Again, these are words that have come from many, many people who I would think, to the deputy, you would consider stakeholders, the people who are making these comments. They're concerned about that kind of thing.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think that's exactly why I outlined some of the growing pains we've gone through.

**Mr Mahoney:** Can someone tell me how much extra money the ministry would be spending in 1993-94 as a result of changes to the OLRA?

**The Chair:** Does the deputy wish to invite someone to come forward?

**Mr Thomas:** There was an increased allocation of funding for the labour board and for some ancillary services in the Ministry of Labour. Gerry?

**Mr Gerry Stuart:** My name is Gerry Stuart. I'm the manager of financial planning and budgeting for the Ministry of Labour.

Currently, our expenditure planning forecast for 1993-94 is showing Bill 40 at a total of \$4.7 million.



This includes \$2 million in salaries and wages, for a total of 39 FTEs, full-time equivalent staff.

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**Mr Mahoney:** How much of that would be what you would call additional expense? Is \$4 million the additional expense relating to the OLRA specifically?

**Mr Stuart:** I don't have that. I've just got in front of me here what we're spending this year, but we can get that information for you.

**Mr Mahoney:** Could you? And I don't want to lose the question that I asked—

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** That, I think, would be an increase in that particular area and we'll get the figures for you, but it's a direct—

**Mr Mahoney:** Yes, and I don't want to lose the question I asked about the cost so far of the work services organization. I think you said you could provide that.

**Mr Thomas:** Can I just go further on that, Mr Mahoney? I am a member of the task force on the organization of work. I have overseen the development of the consultation paper on the work organization service. I've been informed about what the results of that consultation so far have been. I can honestly say to you that I have not heard anyone, that you're the first person who's suggested—

**Mr Mahoney:** Well, that's good.

**Mr Thomas:** —that one of the ideas might be the establishment of committees in all the workplaces or in a number of workplaces. That's not been on in terms of the task force's recommendations; that's not been on in terms of the consultations; that's not any of the ideas that have been contained in our paper. Our paper is far more general. I would go back to the words you use, the notion of we're looking in general for some ways to help workplace parties move to higher-involvement workplaces, and certainly our interest at this point is those who want to do so.

The question becomes, what is the role of government and the ministry, if any, in trying to encourage more of them to want to do it? And there's the ancillary question of whether we try to encourage ones who don't want to do it to do it. We haven't gotten that far and there is no intention of creating the kind of machinery that I think is the worry behind your question.

**Mr Mahoney:** But let me give you some right from your own document: "Discussion themes: What governance in housing arrangement would best deliver services?" I don't know what that—what that means is a board with a chair, \$200- to \$400-a-day per diems, an office structure of some kind, some kind of a policing agency along the lines of either health and safety or pay equity or any number of agencies that have been set up. What should the functions of the governing body or advisory board be? Who should sit on it? How large

should it be? What must be done to ensure a role for and representation—my point again—of the unorganized sector, small business etc? How should appointments be made? How should it be chaired?

If you follow the pattern that's been established, we're talking about a bipartite board with co-chairs from management and labour. We're possibly talking about an independent chair. It could be another \$125,000-a-year chair position. We could have agency people; again, the rumour is that there will be 10 full-time staff people hired to set this function going. I recognize that not all of these questions have been answered, but I don't have a forum in which to even ask them, other than this situation, and nobody yet has had that forum. It's been a group of people who have good intentions, sitting around a boardroom discussing all of these ideas.

I just have, in my limited six years in this place, the experience—and this is not a partisan comment, because I think all three parties have contributed to this—that government ideas turn into government agencies that go from zero to \$9 million a year in about 60 seconds flat. I am very concerned that we're talking potentially about an agency being created here to go around telling everyone to be nice to one another at an incredible cost, with another bureaucratic level of red tape that business does not need.

Then, of course, the question is, is it funded directly out of the general reserves? Is it funded out of the black hole? Is it funded out of payroll taxes? Is it funded through a workers' compensation type of system, where companies pay for this? You've got to pay for this stuff. When we're slashing the heck out of the civil service, we're slashing the heck out of all kinds of services in the community, one of the things people tell us all the time, Minister, is "Prioritize your government duties." I just question very strongly, and as I say, I don't see a forum where I'm going to have an opportunity to really effectively ask questions, debate this thing, get into the meat of it, before it's going to be up and running and created and going around interfering in business. My view is that when you interfere in business, you potentially interfere in labour because you could hurt business, which would hurt jobs.

I want to really flag this on the only opportunity I have in a place like this to say, "Slow down here," or, "Come to us," or, "Bring it"—I mean, can this just go through cabinet, and boom, we've got a decision made with no input by the people who are elected to represent the people of this province? I get the feeling it can. There's a question in there somewhere. Don't you agree?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** No, I don't, and I'll tell you why.

One, when we started the whole exercise in labour law reform and some of the things we're now trying to



do in terms of the board and so on, it was a recognition that we had to find a better—and I stress again, because it's one point that even my detractors admit, whether they believe me or not: I've always stressed that we've simply got to find a more cooperative way of doing things. If we come up with some good ideas in this exercise that's there in a general way—the intent wasn't to set up committees in every workplace, I can tell you; it was, in terms of health and safety over a certain figure, but not in terms of this project.

But apart from that, one of the first comments I made when I made my presentation today was the difficulty I have found in taking \$43.5 million out of the Ministry of Labour budget. Looking at the next two years under the MYERP as well, I can tell you, whether you accept it or not, that you'd have to have one awfully God-damned good argument to get any major financial incentive through on almost any program unless you really could show what appeared to be a very definite payoff. So we've got to come up with ways and means that don't mean adding to the bureaucracy. We've been working at cutting back on that and, in doing so, trying not to cut out the front-line services.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. I would like to—

**Mr Mahoney:** The deputy wants a public forum. You're going to bring this to a public forum for debate, right?

**The Chair:** In the interests of time and according to the standing rules and with the full support of this committee, I'd like to recognize Mrs Witmer to proceed with her allocated time on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party.

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Waterloo North):** Thank you. I'd like to deal with the entire area of employment law. I'd like to just preface my remarks by saying that certainly recent legislative initiatives have imposed a very significant administrative and financial cost on the employers in this province. Not only has there been a financial and administrative cost, but I think if you take a look at what's happening in the province, there has also perhaps been a cost in terms of the jobs lost.

I understand there was a report submitted on Friday by a Professor Horvath at one of the Premier's committees. During that presentation he indicated that we're not going to be seeing any new investment in this province in the near future. Our job is going to be to make sure that those who are here remain in this province and that we somehow encourage the growth of small business and new entrepreneurs. So I am very concerned that what we have happening in this province, although we see all this change taking place, is not necessarily in the best interests of the employees in this province. What it's doing is really contributing to significant job loss and loss of job opportunity.

We know that we have in this province a huge

network of legislation in the employment law field. We can take a look at the Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Pay Equity Act, the Labour Relations Act, and pretty soon we're going to have the Employment Equity Act. These are all designed to protect and enhance employees' rights in the workplace.

However, we do need to recognize that in each case, Ontario is in the forefront. We are ahead of every other Canadian province, we are ahead of the northern United States, and we have to recognize these are the provinces and the states that we compete with. As a result, as I indicated before, we now have much more of an administrative and financial burden on employers in this province.

Certainly it's this type of legislative environment, which is very onerous, that has made this province a less attractive jurisdiction for investment and reinvestment. That is being confirmed now in studies that are being done. People simply don't see Ontario as a place in which they wish to invest. That's being confirmed.

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We need to recognize that capital does not observe geographic boundaries and therefore we need to recognize that, in whatever we're doing, if we really are concerned about the employees in this province, we need to make sure that our employment law legislation keeps pace with our neighbouring jurisdictions.

I guess I could say on a positive note that it's a wonderful time to be a consultant in this province or to be a labour law practitioner. There's all sorts of money to be made interpreting the laws and taking clients to court to test the laws. Business is booming in this province because of all the new legislation we've seen in recent years.

However, there's a trend I find very unsettling: We're seeing in this province people turn towards self-employment. They don't want to have employees because they don't need this burden of red tape, regulation and what have you. We're also seeing a trend towards part-time work.

I guess the question I ask, and I hope someone will answer for me at some time, is: Is Ontario's myriad of employment legislation a disincentive to the creation of new full-time jobs? I would say to you, I think there is some impact and I think this government needs to consider some of the implications of what is happening in this province.

I'd like to deal with employment regulation in the workplace because it's like taxation; it's a question of balance. If you have too much it can be more damaging than any of the benefits. I also have to wonder if we're achieving our objectives. If you apply this test to

workplace regulation in Ontario today, there's no question in my mind that we're headed in the wrong direction.

We all agree there's a need for regulation in principle, but in recent years we have had far too much new government regulation. I don't have to remind you what's been happening in recent years. You take a look at the Bill 40 debate; you take a look at the Ontario health and safety bill; it's part of this huge network and in each case that legislation was passed with a view to achieving a desired social, economic and even political objective. In each case, unfortunately, some of this legislation has been amended to a greater extent with a view to expanding its scope and its impact, and we've seen that at the WCB. We see the scope; we see the impact change.

The two concerns I have about all this legislation are, number one, the cost. There is a cost to business; there is a cost to the government—and Mr Mahoney has pointed out the cost to the government—there is a cost to our economy and there's a cost to society. There are direct costs and there are compliance costs.

The second question and the concern I have is, is it working? In the case of anti-discrimination legislation, we know it's needed and certainly we can't debate the value because it is absolutely necessary, but whenever you apply legislation to the marketplace there's always a tradeoff.

We need to recognize, first of all, that it does increase the cost of doing business. We know that the contentious Bill 40 has been a barrier to private sector investment from outside the province. We also know now there are people in this province who tell us, because of the new implications of the workplace health and safety, they'll never have 10 employees. I'm hearing from people that because of employment equity, "My workforce will never get past 49."

Those are jobs that are never going to be created because there are going to be higher business costs and, as a result, we have to take a look at the impact of this type of legislation on our economy, particularly today when we've got this increasingly competitive global economic environment. As I pointed out to you in the introduction, we know that new investment just is not coming to Ontario.

Ultimately, then, the tradeoff for this legislation is fewer jobs. I know people don't want to hear that, but you know, it's the truth, it's a fact, because the cost of private sector compliance increases the cost of doing business. Have you ever taken a look at the paper burden that small business is facing at the present time? It's totally unbelievable. Higher costs mean fewer jobs, and therefore this excessive regulation we've got in this province today really is contributing to excessive unemployment.

For example, when we introduced Bill 40, we never

had an independent impact analysis conducted. I believe if any government introduces new legislation, you need to take a look at the impact and you need to make that information available up front so that everybody knows what's going to result. As a result, we had a very contentious bill that created a tremendous amount of hardship.

You take a look at the pay equity legislation that was introduced in 1987. Again, there was no cost-benefit analysis that was ever done prior to 1987, nor to my knowledge has the government done any analysis since. We do know that the cost of compliance included hundreds of millions of dollars for consultants.

That is money employers were not able to make available to their employees. They weren't able to increase the wages of the working women. In fact, in some cases they had to let employees go because they were forced to pay other people more money. In some cases, they ended up paying more for the consultant than they did in the way of pay equity. An example is that a Falconbridge executive told us that Kidd Creek Mines spent \$216,000 to identify pay equity adjustments of just \$215,000 company-wide.

So pay equity didn't necessarily increase the wages of working women, nor did it increase job opportunities. It actually contributed to the loss of some jobs for working women.

In a similar vein, we know that you want to hike the minimum wage. You've not done a cost-benefit analysis. According to the University of Toronto study, if you raise the minimum wage to 60% of the average industrial wage, it's going to cost some 53,000 jobs, or 1% of the labour force.

If I talk to employers across this province about the minimum wage increase, this is what they tell me: They tell me that if they have to increase the minimum wage, they're going to have to reduce the number of their employees; for example, from 10 to 8 because they don't have the dollars. We now have young people in college, university and high school who can't get part-time jobs. Also, if you eliminate the wage gap between the student and the adult, students will never get jobs at a time when they're struggling more than ever before and need the money. So you are eliminating some of the job opportunities by the very rules and regulations and legislation that you are introducing.

To me, I think what you need to do is to start to study the issue first and then you need to start using the findings to develop alternatives. That is not happening at the present time.

I'll give you an example of what they've done in the United States. The 1992 economic report of the President puts the compliance cost of worker safety standards at \$100 million for each life saved. I don't think any one of us ever wants to put an employee in jeopardy,



but I don't believe we've ever done an analysis in Ontario as far as our occupational health and safety standards are concerned, and I think we do have a responsibility to determine here, as in all the other areas, the extent and the nature of the compliance costs. We have an obligation to use the information to reduce the regulations and to reduce the costs when they don't contribute to worker safety, and there are things we could be doing differently that would not detract from that.

Right now, Ontario's workplace regulation is among the most onerous in the developed world. It's made us a much less attractive jurisdiction for investment and reinvestment and yet we have absolutely no handle on the cost of compliance. It's sad because it is the working men and women in this province who are really paying the price.

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Even sadder still is the fact that some of these laws are not working. They're simply not working. If you take a look at the proposed employment equity legislation, it can well mean that it will drive business and private sector investment out of this province. It could well mean fewer jobs, which means that here's a bill intended to help the four designated groups, but it could mean less job opportunity in the future.

I think it's time we put all of this government regulation to a competitive test. We need to get a handle on the compliance costs. What we need to do is quantify the tradeoffs, identify the compliance cost and test the legislative and other remedies on the basis of performance, because if we do that we are going to have more safety, we're going to have more fairness and we're going to have equity in the workplace. Furthermore, we're going to have more workplaces. If we have more workplaces, we're going to have more jobs and we're going to have more opportunities for people in this province.

I suggest that this is the direction this government needs to go in. I hope they will take a look at what I've suggested because I believe it will have a positive impact on employers and employees alike, and that it will contribute to a more safe and secure workplace environment if we take a look at that regulatory framework and put it to the competitive test.

Because I know the time is short and I don't have an opportunity to get all the information I want today, I'm going to put my questions to you and I will table them. I hope that if we have time you can give me responses, but if not, I hope those responses will be provided to me.

I want to deal with the wage protection program because that was the area the minister spoke to. Since that program was introduced, I've had quite a few individuals write or phone me regarding cases where they've experienced a very lengthy delay in the process-

ing of claims. I think on two occasions this spring I raised this matter in the Legislature. When I made inquiries, I was told it was not unusual for cases to take one year to 18 months to be processed and paid. The deputy minister reassured me that these cases were isolated examples and also indicated that there was a problem in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

However, my questions are these: What at the present time is the average time it takes to process claims? Why do we continue to receive complaints that ministry officials are telling people it will take one year or more to process claims?

I have a letter attached here from a Mr Dan Boettger in Waterloo who writes to me, "When I brought this matter before the Ministry of Labour, I was told it would be better if I could get things cleared up on my own since they have a 12-month backlog." He writes, "I find this totally unacceptable from an organization that was designed to protect the employees' rights."

Also, I'd like to know how many claims have been submitted. How many claims have been processed? How much money has been paid out? How much will it cost to pay all of the outstanding claims? Finally, how much is the average amount of claim and the average amount of award? This is an area I am extremely concerned about. I've had a lot of employees who have suffered loss of jobs and then unfortunately been put in a position where they haven't been able to access the money they feel was owed to them, and it certainly created some hardships for themselves and also for their families. I'd appreciate some responses to those.

In the area of workers' compensation, I had written to the Treasurer asking him what is happening with the social contract savings. I've not had a response. I'd like to know when a decision is going to be made. I'd like to know why the government is even considering taking this money and what its justification might be for this hidden tax on the employer community.

The Treasurer, by the way, has indicated to the municipal utilities that they can keep their social contract savings. However, as I say, I don't believe that I've ever received a response to my letter to him asking him the status of the social contract savings that were achieved by the WCB.

I'd like to take a look at the area of the Workplace Health and Safety Agency. I think we all know that this issue of health and safety certification is a very contentious issue. It is causing grave concerns for the business community. They are very concerned because there is a perception that some very unfair decisions are being made by the Workplace Health and Safety Agency.

As I indicated to you today, the management co-chair, Mr McMurdo, does not have the confidence of the business community and it is most concerned. They see him as a puppet of the labour community and they



are looking for the minister to certainly consider other candidates for this position. That's a very serious concern.

This is an agency that has a very difficult task and obviously it's critical that there be confidence on both sides. I hope that you will give this very serious consideration. I can tell you that this is an issue I've been receiving letters and phone calls on for a long time now. It's one that I've hesitated to get involved in because I hoped that the ministry could resolve this issue to the satisfaction of the business community, but that appears not to have happened.

I had a question in the House today and it regarded the fact that this questionnaire had been sent out and we had an arbitrary time line for a response of September 30, 1993. As you know, there are grave concerns because the business community feels there are some unanswered questions. They're very concerned, because as a result of how they respond to the questionnaire, it's going to have an impact on the length and cost of training.

What they're trying to do is make some written submissions, get some answers to their questions from the WHSA. Why are the employers being forced to meet what they perceive to be this unreasonable deadline, and also, will you undertake to put a hold on the certification process until the outstanding questions of the business community have been worked out in cooperation with all the parties? If this agency is to have success, we need to really be assured that all the partners have their questions answered.

In looking forward at this agency, we know there have been some replacements of the members on the board. One concern the business people have is the fact that most of the new representatives represent big business. That is one of the issues that I think the Ministry of Labour needs to be concerned about. Much of the legislation and many of the happenings in this province involve the big business community. There seems to be a lack of recognition that small business is increasingly playing a very important part in this province and yet it doesn't seem to have adequate input into the decision-making or into the commissions or into the agencies. They seem to be underrepresented.

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If you take a look at the Premier's committee on workers' compensation, again you will see that it is dominated by big business. So the small and medium business sectors in this province feel very, very unrepresented in the decision-making. I think this ministry needs to deal with that issue, how you make those people feel part of the process, because they certainly feel that their needs and concerns are being neglected at the present time.

I think a good example of that is the Workplace Health and Safety Agency. They do not believe that the

program that has been set up responds to the needs of the small business community and the fact that they have a very low-hazard workplace. What they believe to be happening is that the criteria that are to be used are biased in assuming that all workplaces should be required to provide the highest possible number of hours for training candidates. At present, as I say, they feel that their needs are being totally neglected.

The other thing they are very concerned about is the cost that is going to be incurred, because they all have to participate in the same program whether or not it is a low-hazard workplace or a high-hazard workplace. They are really wondering why you aren't using methods that would be more appropriate for 1993 as far as education is concerned; for example, taking a look at long-distance education. Instead of forcing the employer community to pay the costs of transportation and accommodation and sending all of these individuals to a centralized location, why are you not making it available through TVO, videos? It would be less costly. Why are you not doing some of it onsite? There doesn't seem to have been any response to the needs and also the need to reduce cost at the present time. I hope you will give some consideration to that.

I'm going to conclude by reading a letter. I think it summarizes very well the displeasure and the disappointment that people in the business community have regarding the content of the certification program and the manner in which it's to be presented. It is written to Mr McMurdo and Mr Forder—a copy did go to the minister—and it is from Mr Mann at Placer Dome Inc.

He writes: "I watched two videos which were blatantly anti-business, anti-management and clearly pro-union. It was patently evident that the intent of the videos was to present management with little or no values, little or no concern for their employees, little or no regard for safety and health issues and who viewed management-employee relations in a reactive, confrontational manner."

Then he went on to say that the methods used are of concern because "little regard has been given to proven principles of adult education, and there are few opportunities for participation and discussion by the trainees."

He is most concerned and he says, "I urge you to seriously examine the direction the WHSA has taken in this manner. It is imperative that management and labour work together in today's very competitive global economy for jobs to be created, wealth to be generated for all Canadians and existing jobs maintained. The program does not reflect the philosophy and practice of the vast majority of the mining industry in Ontario but presents a tone that is divisive, confrontational and likely to give rise to suspicion, discontent and acrimony.

"This is not the purpose or mandate of the WHSA and this is not why the WHSA was established. These will be the results, however, unless you shift your

approach to recognize that the WHSA is both the servant of management and labour, that safety and health is the joint concern of all the parties in the workplace and that problems can best be solved by the parties working proactively together."

These are the concerns I think that reflect—in fact I know they reflect very well, because they've been expressed by other people. I would hope the ministry can address them. I think the most serious issue you have right now is resolving the problems of the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, and I hope I will get a written response to the concerns I've raised.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The deputy has some responses. I have a few that are a little more generic, I guess. These are not necessarily in the order in which they were raised by you, Ms Witmer.

The hundreds of millions, the figure you quoted that we have spent on consultants in terms of the pay equity process—

**Mrs Witmer:** I didn't say you; I said the employer community.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Certainly the inference is that somehow or other we're spending hundreds of millions on a program that I think is beginning to work. We've gone from 63% in the last few years, for full-time women at least, to 70% of men's wages. I would like to have seen it a lot further and a lot more, but I think it's an indication at least that the program is starting to work.

In terms of what we're doing and how we want to train workers in the province of Ontario, once again I may have the wrong impression from your remarks. Are you suggesting, when you say that these programs we're putting in place should not be there, in health and safety, for example, that we should not be proceeding down the program of trained committees and the health and safety investment? That is clearly seen, I can tell you, by both sides as being one of the success stories and one of the approaches we should be taking in terms of workers in the workplace. Should we not be looking for programs that involve workers in the decisions when it comes to productivity in their plants or their ability to compete in world markets? I think we'd be nuts not to go the road that we're going down now.

I have some real difficulties with the premise which, it seems to me, is that we're going to compete, and if we're going to compete it's going to be on the basis of what we can save in the workplace and among our workers. I don't think that's the approach this country wants or is ready to buy. Certainly we would differ there. Maybe that's where there's a really obvious political difference; it's certainly not the approach I want to buy. I think we are going to achieve one heck of a lot more in terms of involving workers in the decisions and building safer and healthier workplaces.

I want to tell you also that I am not one who has said the answer is in yet on some of the results of Bill 40. But I will remind you that I was the target of some of the barbs and billboards and posters and "Wanted" posters in restaurants and what not, which I thought an extremely negative and unfair campaign around this province. The evidence to date is that the bill is working. We are seeing a faster turnaround time. We are getting as many comments from business, I can tell you, about less cost and faster solving of some problems as we are from the labour movement.

There is nothing to indicate the charge that was there, simply, "You are going to destroy investment in the province of Ontario." I can tell you that's not what we're seeing so far in terms of the legislation. As a matter of fact, I think it's adding to what is an improvement over the last short period of time in investment in the province of Ontario.

There were two other very useful documents at the Premier's Council that I'll make a point of seeing you get that will give you some indication of what's happening in that particular field.

I had one other point that has left my mind at the moment. I may get back to it, but I'll turn it over for a moment to the deputy minister.

**Mr Mahoney:** Did they spell your name right and use a current picture?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Yes, they spelled my name right and they used a current picture.

**Mr Mahoney:** We should be so famous.

**Mr Thomas:** I'll try to respond to the questions; I don't think I have answers for all of them, but the ones I do have. Can we get back to you, Ms Witmer, on the others?

On the wage protection program, the average time to process a wage protection claim: We do all of our employment standards claims together, so one employment standards officer will be doing not just wage protection claims but other kinds of employment claims, so we only have statistics that deal with: What is the backlog of wage protection work remaining to be done? How long is it taking from the time the claim comes in till it gets processed?

1700

At the end of August, we had the turnaround time reduced to 157 days. When I say reduced, it had reached a high in February 1992, a year and a half ago, of 191 days. We're talking something like five and a half months, and we think we'll be able to continue to make progress in bringing that down, not because we're adding more people but because we think we'll be able to find more effective ways of doing employment standards work. We've been doing a lot of things like self-help kits and people getting together and having their own mediation, if you will, to try to cut that down.



As to the question of why we continue to receive complaints that it takes a year or more, I think it's fair to say that the problem in the Kitchener-Waterloo area is still a problem and we're still trying to find ways to deal with that. Therefore, it would not surprise me if there would be some complaints continuing to come in about a year or more, but I still stand by the figure that we're in the range of five and a half to six months on average.

In terms of how many claims submitted, I think the minister gave that figure in his opening comments. It was \$113 million paid out since the program began in October 1991. That's been paid out to 48,000 workers since the program started up in October 1991.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** As I asked for an update on that, I understand those were the figures as of yesterday. Those figures, to the best of my knowledge, are right up to date.

**Mr Thomas:** On the still to be paid out, I don't know that I can answer that, because the program is an ongoing program and we continue to receive employment wage protection program claims. That might be a difficult one to get. I think the average amount of the claim is something in the order of \$3,500. I'll confirm that, but that's just for your information at this point. Subject to confirmation, I think it's in the range of \$3,500.

The Workers' Compensation Board social contract savings: The Treasurer has indicated to us and has notified the chair of the Workers' Compensation Board that the social contract savings can be applied to the WCB's unfunded liability. It is not being claimed back, if you will, by government, is the answer to that question. That's a recent event I think, as of the beginning of this week.

On the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, I continue to be very close to this issue, perhaps closer to it than I sometimes wish to be, but I gather not as close as some would like me to be. My sense of this is that, first of all, the composition of the board at the Workplace Health and Safety Agency substantially came from recommendations from the management advisory committee. They are the ones who came up with the nominees, who were substantially large business. There has been the appointment of a small business individual.

**Mrs Witmer:** Is that the Canadian Tire rep?

**Mr Thomas:** Yes. Mr Reeves, I think it is, from Barrie, and the agency recently announced the formation of the small business committee of the board.

I take your point that we've got to do a lot more work in thinking about how we can better represent small business's interests, because small business does represent a very substantial percentage of the employer stakeholders. That continues to be an ongoing challenge, as Mr Mahoney's question about how we capture the

interests of unorganized workers continues to be an ongoing challenge.

As to the questions you raise around why employers are being forced to meet deadlines and the questionnaire and all of that, I think I have to respond reasonably directly with a worry. A lot of us spent a lot of time earlier this year putting the Workplace Health and Safety Agency's employer board back together again, if you will, and we have, again, an extraordinarily high-calibre board. We've got senior people from companies who have been on boards of directors of other organizations, and I think the real challenge is not so much whether Mr McMurdo gets replaced; I think the real challenge is, can the employer side get a structure in place that allows it to be as effective as the organized labour side?

If they don't do that, replacing McMurdo with somebody else doesn't move the yardsticks an inch. It simply means that we're going to continue to get requests from you, from employers, from everyone, saying: "Intervene. Don't make them do the deadlines. Put a hold on certification." Do these kinds of things that sound as though somehow we've created a board that has unequal numbers of people on it. I mean, that's the appearance that I get when I get the mail, when I hear the complaints from the employers' side.

They've got to find a way. I've had some discussions with people on the employer caucus, and I will continue to have those over the next few weeks, about how they can put in place a structure, an organization, on their side that allows these kinds of things that are driving them crazy to stop happening. So I think it's not a question of McMurdo or not; I think it's a question of the right structure or not.

The certification training that is happening is working extraordinarily well, as judged by the responses from people who have been through the course. I was just checking with the agency today. They say something in the order of 500-plus people, management and workers, have gone through the various training programs. They're really up and running now. It's not just the worker centre doing it; it's the IAPA. They're expecting 200 and 300 people a week will be trained from now on, and maybe more. And when they've gone to the graduation ceremonies, and some of my staff in fact have gone to the graduation ceremonies, their view is that both sides are extraordinarily pleased with the training they've gotten.

**Mrs Witmer:** Are they large workplaces, though? Are they, you know, from the manufacturing—

**Mr Thomas:** I would think that most of them would be at this point, yes. So it isn't tested, if you will.

**Mrs Witmer:** That's right.

**Mr Thomas:** That response that I'm giving you is not tested perhaps yet on the small business part of it,



and of course there are some real questions about whether small business can have a bit more time to be part of it.

If I can come back to your general set of questions around the agency, and you preface them that McMurdo has lost the confidence of the employer community, I have to say that my very close-in working with it suggests that to simply replace McMurdo is to not solve the problem. To solve the problem we have to figure out a way to make bipartism work, in which the business side, the employer side, is as effective as the organized labour side. I think there are some ways to do that, and we're working on trying to make that happen.

Your comments about more effective ways to do the training are really appropriate comments. I know the agency has looked at, for example, whether there are ways to get more health and safety training through other means, whether it be OTAB or part of a curriculum in a school. I mean, why do we have to wait till someone has been in the job for 10 years or come out of school before he gets training in health and safety for the first time? There's been nothing substantially done there yet, but I just want you to know that people are having the kinds of conversations that you would want them to have around more cost-effective and different ways to do health and safety training.

I think I've answered most of your questions.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think there's one point that can be a little controversial but also has to be put on record in terms of the bipartite approach that's being tried here, and nobody has forsaken it yet, although it went through, as I say, a bumpy first year.

If people are going to feel or want to feel a part of the process—because a lot of decisions were made and then not followed through on that would have thrown the schedule all to hell in a handbasket earlier on at the agency level—they've got to be part of the process. At the moment I think there's a relatively good board there now. How much that can be broadened or widened or whether it can include other people, one of the things that has to be clearly understood there is that if it's going to be changed, they've got to be part of the process, not just feel part of it.

1710

**Mr Thomas:** Could I also make one final point? You didn't raise it, but I think it's important to make the observation that I can say to you that the agency's board has been trying to come to grips with coming up with the recommendation for a neutral part-time chair. That's been a matter of ongoing concern that I know both of you have expressed to me through people who have come and talked to you about it, and I believe that we are getting a recommendation from the board for a neutral chair. What we do with it remains to be seen, but I should say to you that I think that is not something that has fallen through the cracks.

**The Chair:** Has the minister completed his responses?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** At the moment.

**The Chair:** Do we have any follow-up ones from Mr Mahoney?

**Mr Thomas:** Can I just come back to your one other point?

**The Chair:** It's not that we come back. The half-hour allotted to the minister and the deputy are to respond to anything they wish that flowed from the deputations of both the official opposition and the PC critics. So if you were just responding to Mrs Witmer or—

**Mr Thomas:** Mrs Witmer.

**Mr Mahoney:** Or they could answer that last question that really wasn't answered when I was finished.

**Mr Thomas:** I've forgotten what it was.

**Mr Mahoney:** I'll tell you.

**Mr Thomas:** Mrs Witmer, on your opening comments around, "Why do we regulate so much?" I think what's behind that question is something we are looking at in the Ministry of Labour in strategic planning in one respect, not so much as to whether we should be passing more or less legislation, but we aren't able to do the kind of job that I would like us to do in enforcing employment standards legislation. There's a real challenge to us about how we do that.

There are a lot of people out there who are not getting the workplace terms and conditions of employment that we say they ought to be getting in law and we're not able to police that, to enforce that. We'll probably never be able to do a complete job on that because of how many people are out there. Two thirds of the workforce is unorganized, and that's millions of people out there who are difficult to get to. That's a challenge, and we're asking questions around how we can do a better job on that.

I think I have to come back and give you an example of an interesting area where we're not exactly sure how your concerns would be captured, and that's in the area of domestics and home workers. These are people who are extraordinarily vulnerable, very often immigrants, very often have limited language skills in English and certainly don't know what their rights are. If they did know what their rights were, it wouldn't make a lot of difference because they wouldn't know what to do about them.

What do we do with that industry? It is a growth industry because it also has, on the other hand, the attractiveness of being an industry that people can do at home and so it has a flexibility to it. People are crying out for us to pass regulations and laws that would protect home workers, and I guess the question that

comes to my mind when I hear what you are saying is, so what do we do with those people? Do we say, "We've just got enough laws on the books"?

How do we handle ongoing situations in which people are saying, "My rights are not being protected"? Do we simply say, "We have enough laws now and we can't handle the ones we've got," or do we try in some ways to respond and hopefully find some innovative ways to enforce?

What's implicit in what you're saying is that we sort of have enough laws and we've got to stop and try to figure out how to make what we've got more competitive. I don't think that we have in every sense the greatest set of rights in the workplace. I go to meetings for deputies of labour across the country, and certainly I would say that we may be the only jurisdiction doing something in here, but over there we're not. Someone else has gone further on home workers and vice versa. So I would say we're probably in the top third, but I would not say that we are way out in front in every single area.

**Mrs Witmer:** When you're talking about that, the question I did ask that you didn't answer and perhaps you can't answer is, you're aware of the fact, as am I, that we are seeing a growing trend towards self-employment. People are working out of their homes. Instead of having three employees somewhere, they're simply working at home. Also, we're seeing a trend towards part-time work.

The question has been raised: Is all of this legislation that's being introduced, all of this government red tape—you've got your OHIP payments too that employers are forced to pay on behalf of employees; it's red tape—really becoming a disincentive to the creation of or the continuation of full-time jobs? I think that's a very serious concern for people in this province and that's why I say I think we really have to take a look at the impact of the legislation. Perhaps it's having a more negative impact on job creation and retention of jobs than it should.

**Mr Thomas:** Yes. I guess what we're debating here—I think it's a healthy debate—is the tension point between how many more regulations do we need versus, when you do more regulations, what effect does that have on the competitive edge? I think that's a fair issue.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think there are also some real questions in terms of the home work issue. For professionals, for some people, being able to work out of the home is a real advantage.

**Mrs Witmer:** It's great.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** They want it and they can be as efficient and effective that way and the companies they're dealing with, the firms, are willing to accept that.

But we also have a real problem that surfaces more

in the Toronto area than in any other area of the province: new citizens, immigrants, people who can't speak English well. So far it's centred—but we're now seeing it in Pizza Pizza and other operations—on the garment workers' trade, where they have to buy the machine themselves—I'm talking about sewers, basically; it's about \$3,000 they've got invested and that's their cost from this point on—and get orders or are given a number of garments that they're to finish the sewing process on.

They are not covered under the hours of work, overtime or vacations and are very fearful of phoning in when they feel they're not getting the proper treatment. They can sew up or produce—we've had a number of them into the office talking to us in recent days—75 garments and then be paid only for 50. There's really no way of checking it unless we have a beefed-up employment standards staff and can get them to start raising the issues with us.

There's no way of enforcing them. Are they entitled to a different minimum wage or something to take on the costs of the machines they're using? What do we do to allow us to be able to enforce for one of the most vulnerable groups in our society today?

You don't have to go far with the women's groups, the intercede groups, some of the church groups, to realize that there is a real concern and a real problem here. That immediately raises issues also in terms of how involved we want to get and what it means to our employment standards staff.

One of the questions I ask at almost every briefing we have with the ministry people is, what's our current time frame on employment standards?

We saw quite a jump, even though we added staff when the wage protection program went in. We're now starting to bring that down substantially. As Jim says, we're about five and a half months and we think we can get it down considerably below that.

But if we opened up and decided to take on as well an area where people really are—I'm not talking about those who want it and those companies where it's beneficial—being exploited; there are certainly examples of it.

We would probably have to have a considerable increase in our employment standards staff. You've got to make some hard choices on what you're going to do and what you spend and how you're going to decide where you can or where you can't protect people.

**Mrs Witmer:** I guess our member for Wellington made the comment yesterday that instead of bringing forward Bill 80, which certainly isn't a priority for these particular women, you did make a commitment to these women that you would bring in some legislation. He expressed his concern and disappointment that this had not occurred, because he does see that as more import-



ant than this Bill 80 we're dealing with at the present time.

1720

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Bill 80, of course, as you also know, was part of the whole Bill 40 package, and I think you'll find as the process goes on that there are an awful lot of people who are interested in it as well as those who aren't.

**Mrs Witmer:** Yes. It's also created tremendous division.

**Mr Mahoney:** Could I ask for clarification of a comment the minister made, just regarding the comment about Pizza Pizza? Has your ministry been involved in some way in the dispute?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Every second night.

**Mr Mahoney:** Every second night. Double cheese, pepperoni?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** No, I'm simply saying that's just another example where we have really seen most of the home work, in the garment workers' trade, but it's obvious that there are a number of trades—marketing and phoning as well as the work of the sewers in the garment trade—that are now entering into home work rather than operating out of some location.

**The Chair:** If there are no further comments from the minister, that completes the first round in accordance with our standing orders.

I must take my direction from the committee. On the first point, do you wish to have the votes stacked till the completion of estimates, which will allow the members to move freely among each of the six ballot items?

Secondly, would you like to go in rotation or would you like to just have the dialogue, which it appears the minister is comfortable with and has been doing for the last 15 minutes, which is his right to do? I'm in your hands.

**Mrs Witmer:** How much time do we have left?

**The Chair:** You have three hours and 15 minutes, but that's just off the top of my head.

**Mrs Witmer:** Are we going till 6 o'clock tonight?

**The Chair:** We can.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think that's what's scheduled, at least what we were told, but it's entirely up to you.

**The Chair:** We cannot continue past the hour of 6.

**Mr Bisson:** I would really stack the votes. It makes sense.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr Bisson:** If the rest of the committee wants to just basically rotate around—

**Mr Mahoney:** Do you have a copy of the ballot items?

**The Chair:** In the estimates book. The clerk will get

you a copy. Do you want to do rotations? Then with 40 minutes remaining before the adjournment period, why don't we do—

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I understand there may be a vote tonight too, which may cut into it by a few minutes, unless that's changed.

**Mrs Witmer:** I guess that's what I was talking about.

**The Chair:** Let's do 10-minute rotations and see how far we get. Mr Mahoney, we can start with you.

**Mr Mahoney:** Just to follow up on some of the issues with the health and safety agency, the deputy talked about how replacing the business representative wouldn't necessarily resolve the problem. I certainly wouldn't want to make this any kind of a personal attack on him, because I think he's a decent individual, but clearly he doesn't have the confidence of the business community. That's what we're hearing. Example: the letter that was done that was sent out throughout the province. All of a sudden everybody got upset about the letter and the tone of the letter, so the letter was—I have this here.

**The Chair:** I'll find you the actual votes.

**Mr Mahoney:** No, it's okay, I'll find them. But the letter was redone—I thought they might have been printed separately, Mr Chair, that's all. So the letter was redone or they backed off that position.

I hear that these videos Mrs Witmer referred to just outraged people, and there are some 20 or 21 of them that have been done and they're looking at redoing them. There's just daily—I mean, it doesn't go away. We stand up and ask questions in the Legislature and we get the standard answer for the standard question, but it doesn't go away.

The fact that graduates are coming out of a training process with some sense of accomplishment really doesn't surprise me. You put someone in industry through a training program on something that's of interest and value to them in their everyday life and of course they're going to come out, I would think, with positive comments.

I don't think the problem is Bill 208. I don't think the problem is the concept. We all agree, business agrees today, and this is where I think I disagree somewhat with the minister's statements earlier, and even the deputy's, that for what I took as the last couple of years, there's been some miraculous improvement in labour relations.

I saw it years ago, many years ago, but even in more recent times, where the business community, whether it's represented by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business or the chamber of commerce and sort of the broad representations or the individual companies—when I spent a year at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology as a small business advocate, I travelled



virtually every week to some part of the province to meet with businesses, and I came away with a really strong feeling that the successful businesses were the ones that recognized that good health and safety saved them money in the end. It cut down on losses that solved the problems and that led to high morale. It did all those things.

I chaired a small committee for Minister Kwinter at the time on Bill 208 to get some changes, to put in the independent, hopefully non-partisan chair and do some other things. The committee was made up of industry representatives, whether it was from the retail sector—and there are some who just won't accept it.

When you get criticisms of the health and safety issue, particularly from the party that delivered Bill 208 to the province, then I think those criticisms are founded more on the fact—not on the issue of health and safety training; some of them are on the methodology, the fact that there appears to be a strong leaning towards the training taking place in the union halls or with the predominance of a union slant, and the video seems to indicate that.

I think what's happened with Bob McMurdo is that he's been put into an advocate's position with a whole bunch of really strong advocates for the other side. I wonder if bipartisanship works at all in an agency like this and if we shouldn't look at complete non-partisanship. That may be impossible, but I would hope it would be the minister's view that Odoardo Di Santo administers the Workers' Compensation Board in a non-partisan way. He may be a partisan appointment of the Premier, and Brian King may be a partisan appointment of the Premier, but you would hope they would be attempting to administer it in a non-partisan way. I have real concerns about the bipartisan approach that seems to sort of be the buzzword of the day.

Your point, I think, Deputy, about business generally not being as well organized on a broad scale just is a reality of life and I don't know that we're ever going to change that. I have real concerns about the effectiveness and the fact that we may find ourselves, over however many years in the future, always having these kinds of fights, having people quit subcommittees and walk out in anger because somebody's predominant in a particular area.

Just comments: I don't know if you want to react to them or if you have any comments, but I guess my question would be, you say you're going to put in a part-time, independent chair. I understood Vic Pathe was originally a full-time chair. Now, am I wrong in that?

**Mr Thomas:** He was part-time.

**Mr Mahoney:** He was part-time; okay. So the chair of that has always been envisioned as a part-time job. I would urge you to get on with appointing that chair and

to reviewing very carefully the appointments, which I understand are coming up in the very near future, of both the labour representative and the management representative. I don't say that as a personal slap at either one of them—I somewhat facetiously referred to them as Batman and Robin—they're dedicated, hardworking people. I don't think there's—

**Mr Bisson:** Who's Batman and who's Robin?

**Mr Mahoney:** Batman is labour; trust me. Robin just does what Batman tells him. The fact that we take a good idea that business and labour have come to support and we put a sense of partisanship in there at all in my view may be the ultimate problem. Maybe we've got to find a way to get rid of the partisanship on either side and put an independent individual in there. They are available. They are around. Not everybody carries a card for one of our parties, thank goodness—

**Mrs Witmer:** I certainly don't.

**Mr Mahoney:** —and get them to do it in a non-partisan way.

1730

**Mr Thomas:** I'm reasonably optimistic that business could do a lot of things on its side that would redress the imbalance. I get back to the point that Ms Witmer made, for example, the questionnaire and the concerns around a questionnaire going out. I would have thought that these are all big people, that these are all grown-ups, and that these are all people who ought to have the capacity to figure out a way to establish a leash between the vice-chair of the employers' side and the employer caucus.

This is not rocket science; this is a fairly straightforward question of how you put in place a process that makes sure that before questionnaires and things like that go out, the employer caucus is satisfied that those are the kinds of things its constituency would want to see go out.

**Mr Mahoney:** But the fact that there have been some mergers in some of the agencies that deliver the training and some people are sort of losing ground in that area—clearly there's no consensus being developed, and in fact the management side on those committees feel it's not being listened to at all.

Now it's fine, as I said before, for me to ask a question in the House, for the minister to stand up, and then there's the politics of it. The reality of it is that you've got an awful lot of unhappiness within the governance structure of the health and safety agency. The letter that Ms Witmer read is not someone, as I understand it, who's part of that governance but is simply an independent voice from business expressing those concerns. I think you're setting up a structure that is doomed to be in a quagmire on a consistent basis.

**Mr Thomas:** The structure is Bill 208. The structure is business and labour, and the person in the middle is

supposed to be a helper, is supposed to be someone who will facilitate the board being able to work properly. So the structure is the structure in—

**Mr Mahoney:** But the structure calls for a strong independent chair, and you haven't had that. That was clearly one of the main concerns that was expressed by business during the debate on Bill 208, and it was a change that was made not without some blood on the floor. So if the two co-chairs are going to be left to their own devices on this thing, with partisanship in either one of their interests, I think you've really got a problem and maybe putting in an independent chair will help.

Have I got a little bit of time left?

**The Chair:** A minute and a half.

**Mr Mahoney:** Let me ask another question. I understand that Management Board is currently involved in a process of accepting tenders for relocation of 170,000 square feet of Ministry of Labour office space.

I want a couple of things. I want some assurance that you're not moving into the Workers' Compensation Board building, number one. I want some assurance that there will be some form of public discussion about the tenders. I understand you're going down in mid-October, which is almost where we are, to a short list of five bidders from a long list of 38 or 37 that were originally considered in the proposal. I'd like to know why the current landlord isn't coming back and negotiating. I can't understand why a landlord would allow a tenant like the Ministry of Labour to just wander off into the night to another building. It just doesn't make any sense to me. So I'd like some answers on some of that stuff, before the decision.

**The Chair:** Deputy, please.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The deputy can take the last one. I want to make a very quick comment on the opening comments that you made as to whether or not this attempt to reach a more cooperative approach was just a recent situation or something that's been going on, as you indicate, for a lot longer.

I don't think there's any question that there's been an effort to change some things. Part of what we're doing, including the health and safety agency and the bipartite approach, is a result of some real successes in the mining industry over the last few years in changing what was never a very friendly relationship in earlier days there, but where the two parties are working together and have made some of the ground-breaking progress in terms of health and safety.

But generally speaking, the perception that things have got to change, I think, on a broader scale is much more recent. The best example, once again, I can give you of that is the experience at Stelco, from both sides, over the last couple of years.

**Mr Thomas:** We aren't planning on moving into

Simcoe Place.

**Mr Mahoney:** You are not?

**Mr Thomas:** We are not.

**Mr Mahoney:** It's too expensive. We couldn't afford the rent.

**The Chair:** Peter Inokai is here from the ministry.

**Mr Peter Inokai:** My name is Peter Inokai and I'm the acting director of finance in the administrative services branch. In response to the question concerning the tender on head office relocation, you're right, there is a tender out and it will be short-listed following October 21.

I'd like to inform you that initially the landlord was not interested in having the Ministry of Labour stay as a tenant in the building because of the confusing circumstances around the Windsor relocation and their own plans for the use of the building. However, we have been advised by the landlord that they are interested and we have received a proposal from them. We will be studying that proposal together with Management Board secretariat, the leasing services agent, and we will be reviewing that before we proceed with the tendering process.

**Mrs Witmer:** I'm still surprised that there doesn't seem to be recognition. I guess, Mr Thomas, you expressed confidence that the Workplace Health and Safety Agency could continue with the present vice-chair, Mr McMurdo. I have to tell you that if you take a look at the communication we receive on a regular basis, there is tremendous concern throughout the management side about Mr McMurdo and I really believe that as a result, the entire agency is being put in a position where nobody trusts what's being done. They have no confidence in the program and they really see it as a vehicle that is pro-union and anti-business. I think if you're going to make a change, you really do need to take a serious look at putting someone in there who does have the confidence of the management side.

I'd like to ask you about the questionnaires that were distributed. We know there was a September 30 deadline. How many questionnaires had been returned to the agency by September 30?

**Mr Thomas:** I think it's 5,000.

**Mrs Witmer:** You think it's 5,000. How many responses do they anticipate are still to come?

**Mr Thomas:** I don't know. I can find out.

**Mrs Witmer:** Okay. It's obvious, then, that the majority of businesses in the province have not yet responded. That's a very small number of the whole—

**Mr Thomas:** I'm not sure what the size of their mailing was, Ms Witmer.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Just before you leave it, I want to make it clear that my background doesn't come out of the business community, but I think there is a bit of



an unfair attack here. There is support there, I can tell you, from the business community as well, in terms of Mr McMurdo. I haven't tried to make any final assessment on that at all as yet, but I think it's also unfair, because there's an obvious effort by some people who had some difficulty after accepting and buying the whole certification process, which resulted in some resignations from the board, and I don't think that battle we had to get over a year ago has ever been fully resolved in some of those people's minds.

**Mr Thomas:** Perhaps I can try to make my point just one other way. My understanding is that Mr McMurdo was originally recommended by the management advisory committee and that's significant. In other words, we put into the Workplace Health and Safety Agency as an employer/vice-chair the person the employers wanted. My point is simply that to take Mr McMurdo out—and following on the minister's comments about being a scapegoat—and putting someone else in and not doing anything else is to repeat it. I am not satisfied that McMurdo was anywhere near as big a problem as the need to think more carefully about the structure.

**Mrs Witmer:** Just in response to the Minister of Labour, I don't come from a business background either, Minister.

1740

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I just was raising this because I thought there's some unfairness here in terms of that person.

**Mrs Witmer:** In fact, I come from a very blue-collar, labour background, so I certainly am quite open to looking at both sides of the issue, and I have to tell you, I often agree with many of the concerns that you express.

I'd like to know what the cost of developing the certification program for the agency was. Do you have any figures?

**Mr Thomas:** No, I don't. But I can find out.

**Mrs Witmer:** Yes, I'd appreciate that. I guess as a follow-up question to you, I would ask you: As a result of the fees that are going to be charged for the program, will the agency, or the government or whoever, be making money?

**Mr Thomas:** What do you mean by that?

**Mrs Witmer:** Is there going to be profit for the agency? This is the employer community that is going to be paying for the training, and I would be interested whether this is break-even or whether there's some plan to make money off the employers.

**Mr Thomas:** I don't know how you define "break-even." I'm not trying to be argumentative; I'm just trying to understand the question, because the agency gets money from the Workers' Compensation Board's fund, and the agency will be getting some additional

revenue from the certification training. It will be up to the board of directors of the Workplace Health and Safety Agency to decide, if it is generating more revenue, what it will do with it.

For example, you probably know that in our expenditure reduction activities earlier this year we stopped the funding of the agency, about \$3 million, for research funding, and that's created some concerns out there in research land from people who have been concerned about having lost their grants. Those would be the kinds of activities that one might hope some of the revenue might end up going to restart. But that again is the kind of decision that I would hope the board would be able to make.

**Mrs Witmer:** Do you know how the board arrived at the costing?

**Mr Thomas:** The amount per week? The \$525 and whatever the figures are for the one week, two weeks, three weeks?

**Mrs Witmer:** Yes.

**Mr Thomas:** No, I don't.

**The Chair:** Ms Witmer, if you wish to have somebody from the board before the committee, that's a legitimate request if there's sufficient notice and they are able to attend. That's part of the normal requests that can be made of anybody within the ministry, provided they can be here. We are going to be scheduled for tomorrow.

**Mrs Witmer:** Okay. I guess I would trust that the deputy minister would endeavour to get that information. I'm not saying that someone needs to be here, but I would certainly be interested in receiving that type of information.

**Mr Thomas:** We'll find that information.

**Mrs Witmer:** As I say, there's a great deal of interest in the agency at the present time, and I think it's extremely important that some of these issues are resolved. I think, as Mr Mahoney pointed out, it's sometimes very difficult for us to access this type of information. We seem to hear everything via the back door, or somebody sends us a letter or makes a phone call. Sometimes, if some of this information could be shared a little more readily, perhaps there wouldn't be the uncertainty that there is at the present time.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Ms Witmer, it seems to me—and this obviously was not adequate—that there have been requests for information from the board members. I know I personally asked them—I'm not sure that I have the authority to direct them—to contact your office and I think Mr Mahoney's office, and I believe they've done that. Now, they may not have covered the things that you wanted, and it may need another visit; I don't know. But I just wanted to make a point that I have tried to get them to respond to some of the questions you've raised with me, and I do believe they did contact



you.

**Mrs Witmer:** Thank you.

**Mr Mahoney:** For the record, they have been in to see me a couple of times and they get madder and madder every time they come.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** That I can't answer for, but I would just make the point that I have tried to have them there to give you some answers.

**Mr Wiseman:** Fan the flames.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I get madder and madder too.

**The Chair:** In the interests of order, I'd like to recognize Mr Bisson.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much. I take it there are other members from my caucus who are on the list. I just don't want to take all the time.

**The Chair:** Yes; Ms Murdock.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you. First of all, I guess, being that this is the first time I think I've participated on estimates with the Ministry of Labour here, I just wanted to put on the record the appreciation of some within the community of Ontario for probably some of the most progressive legislation that's been passed in this province in years when it comes to labour relations; namely, Bill 40, Bill 80 and other things that are being worked on. I know there's a strong recognition on the part of the people of my constituency, which is mainly blue collar, of the attempts the minister has made and the government has made in order to address some of the issues of concern that labour has had for a number of years within the province. I think there's a deep appreciation.

Although I must say, to be fair to others, there is also a sense that there's more to be done and that more should have been done and, "We didn't get enough." But I think there is a recognition that we've gone a certain amount of the way.

Now, switching to my other subject, which is the question of the WCB, there is not as much of a concerted message out there on the part of employees, injured workers, employers and every other stakeholder when it comes to the Workers' Compensation Board.

The Workers' Compensation Board is seen, by a lot of people who deal with it, to be an extremely bureaucratic board that is very difficult to deal with. I guess there is this real expectation now in regard to what you've announced as minister in regard to getting the Premier's Council on labour-management to deal with the question of WCB.

People in my community are wondering, and it's not very well known yet, but some of the people who know of the move are saying, "Can we expect, Gilles, any concrete proposals coming forward to government having to do with concrete changes to the act that governs the Workers' Compensation Board to address

questions of injured workers, and also addressing some of the concerns of employers?"

Can you maybe tell us where you think this is going to go. I know that you're trying to get them to take a look at it in an unbiased way, but are we really looking at the end of having something to happen with this?

**Mr Thomas:** The process that has been under way since I think around June, Mr Bisson, has been a very effective process to date. Business and labour have tried to work extremely well on some very, very difficult issues such as the governance of the Workers' Compensation Board, such as how to build in more financial accountability and how to tackle some of the very real problems facing the board: the unfunded liability, the fact that there are a number of workers on low pensions who haven't had those issues addressed. There are a number of important issues on both the employer and the worker side that are being looked at.

There is a strong urge by the Premier I think to bring the matter to a head over the next few weeks, and he would like to see this matter resolved by as close to the end of October as possible. He's obviously hopeful that there'll be consensus recommendations coming forward, and those would obviously be the ones that he would want to act on.

I'm very close to it because I'm chairing a secretariat of people who are putting the materials together for the Premier's labour-management group. I can say that everyone is making a real effort to reach a consensus but I can't tell you whether or not I think it's likely that we will get there. There is every effort being made to do it, but these are very, very difficult issues. They're very complicated, and we're asking business and labour to reach some agreements.

**Mr Bisson:** To be fair in my statement, I do want to say that I've heard from both sides who are involved in that process that they do feel as if it's moving along. It's gone a heck of a long way over the past, and there is a recognition that it is going somewhere.

What I would want to bring is probably what we hear in every riding across the province of Ontario. There's such an anxiety for something to happen at the WCB that it's very hard to hold it back.

**Mr Thomas:** Yes.

**Mr Bisson:** That is the concern.

On the other thing very quickly, and I will pass over to my colleague and leave her about five minutes, I am curious as to the question about the social contract as related to the WCB. There was some discussion a while back about some \$10 million being utilized in order to deal with the social contract obligations of the Workers' Compensation Board from the accident fund and transferring that to consolidated revenue. Maybe you just can comment on that.

**Mr Thomas:** Yes. Just to be very clear on that,

there was a legitimate worry in the workers' compensation community up until this week that the money that came out of the social contract savings at the Workers' Compensation Board and other workers' compensation agencies would have to be given over to the consolidated revenue fund. The decision of the Treasurer, which was communicated to the chair of the Workers' Compensation Board this week, is that this is not the case. What is the case is that the \$10 million can be kept within the workers' compensation system to help pay down the unfunded liability. It is good news from a workers' compensation perspective.

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**Ms Sharon Murdock (Sudbury):** My question has more to do with the restructuring process. I'm on the seventh floor of the building, as you know, and we used to share it with occupational disease. The restructuring process which went on right after we got elected was just beginning. It had been discussed briefly, I guess, and booklets had been put out and the committees had been working. One of the restructuring things was that the expertise that had been gathered together on the seventh floor in terms of occupational disease was going to be moved into the regional offices.

I did not like that idea, and the previous deputy and I had many conversations on the subject. He promised me faithfully that there would be a review at the end of a year and that they would monitor the situation in terms of my concern being that we would lose the expertise that had been developed in terms of specialties of occupational disease. I've been busy with workers' comps, as you know, so I haven't been paying much attention to it. I was just wondering where it's at, if it has been monitored and how it's going.

**The Chair:** What's the latest promise, Deputy?

**Mr Thomas:** Mary Tate is here from operations.

**The Chair:** Welcome, Mary. Please introduce yourself by your position in the ministry. Maybe you have some promises for Ms Murdock.

**Ms Murdock:** It just proves, though, Mr Chair, since you're going to make these pointed comments, that none of our questions is preplanned. Go ahead.

**The Chair:** Nor does this ministry discriminate with respect to giving answers.

**Ms Mary Tate:** I'm Mary Tate. I'm the director of the occupational health and safety branch in the operations division of the ministry. I think the answer to your question is twofold. First of all, in terms of the professional and specialized staff in the field areas, all of the field areas have active professional and specialized services sections with a manager who is responsible to ensure that support is available to the front-line officers on an ongoing basis and as it's needed. All of the disciplines are represented in the area offices.

In terms of the main office structure that supports the

field, we also have a section of professional and specialized services which has members of all of the disciplines represented, although some of them in the main office do it in conjunction with field delivery jobs as well.

The answer to your question is that the availability of all the disciplines remains and the expertise remains. I would have to say that in the executive compensation plan process some of the very difficult decisions that we had to make did relate to a reduction in the size of the professional staff, but it is our belief that we have maintained that resource at an adequate level to meet the needs of the field delivery.

**Ms Murdock:** In terms of the last part of what you just said, that means we use a consultancy basis? Is that how we are doing it if the spill or whatever has been in an area where we have no longer got that expertise?

**Ms Tate:** Each of the areas has expertise in occupational medicine, occupational hygiene and ergonomics. They still have the capacity to do air sampling in every one of the areas, plus we have some expertise, either on a full-time or part-time basis, to coordinate and lead those disciplines in the head office branch.

**Ms Murdock:** I have no other questions.

**The Chair:** I have a question from Mr Wiseman.

**Mr Wiseman:** It's really a quick question to do with the Workers' Compensation Board as well. The biggest claim at workers' compensation, at least from my constituency, is back injuries. I'm just wondering who sets the rules with respect to equipment that has to be worn or should be worn. In some jurisdictions you can't even lift up a toothpick without wearing a special back harness, and yet it doesn't happen here. I'm just wondering who makes the rules and how would a rule like that be brought into effect so that the number of back injuries in various sectors could be reduced.

**Mr Thomas:** That's a good question. I don't think we have the kinds of rules that you're talking about available. I think that, for example, under the health care regulations, not the phase that we've implemented but the phase that is still waiting to happen, there would be some recommendations around how to handle things like patient lifting. That would be one of the areas where we would be able to minimize the kind of strain on the backs of people who are lifting patients in the health care sector. But we don't have a general set of rules that covers the kinds of concerns you're expressing.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** We didn't proceed in that area in the last round. We did the health care regs that dealt with a number of important items, but essentially non-cost items. One of the areas that is not off the burner but was not proceeded with were the issues of violent patients and lifting, which are the causes of an awful lot of the injuries and two of the reasons why you see some

question as to the rates in some of the occupations. That, because of the costs involved, was hived off from the rest of the regs and is now in the process of some discussion with the various ministries to see just exactly what we can or can't do because of the costs involved. There will be a process of setting some kind of standards, but that may be a little piece down the road as yet.

**Mr Wiseman:** I know that in some industries people are lifting weights that are quite heavy. They're doing it all day long. If a weight lifter were to do that in a gym, he would be wearing a special belt. It just doesn't make any sense that somebody in an industry doing that kind of lifting wouldn't also want to on their own, let alone have somebody else incur the cost.

**Mr Bisson:** It's not much.

**Mr Wiseman:** In Florida, you can't lift anything without wearing a special belt. I know that.

**The Chair:** Any other questions from the governing party?

**Mr Bisson:** I just want a short question. I was just curious in regard to the hardrock mining policy, if you know where that's at. The Industrial Disease Standards

Panel was supposed to be, I think, bringing back to the central board at one point a recommendation on the hardrock mining policy, and it related gold to lung cancer.

**Mr Thomas:** I don't have an answer. I can undertake to get back to you on that one.

**Mr Bisson:** No, it's okay. I was just curious.

**The Chair:** If there are no further questions, then this committee—

**Mr Wiseman:** We have these resolutions we'd like to pass.

**The Chair:** Why don't we just rush to challenge the Chair immediately? Could I suggest to committee members that we have two hours and 35 minutes remaining, that we will reconvene on Tuesday, October 12, and that if we start at 4:30, we'll have a full and complete approach by day's end.

**Interjection:** At 3:30. You're an hour behind.

**The Chair:** I'm on Pacific standard time. I must be a New York Giants fan or something.

This committee stands adjourned to reconvene on Tuesday, October 12.

The committee adjourned at 1758.







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\*Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

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Fletcher, Derek (Guelph ND) for Mr Hayes

Murdock, Sharon (Sudbury ND) for Mr Lessard

Witmer, Elizabeth (Waterloo North/-Nord PC) for Mr Carr

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 12 October 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 12 octobre 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Ministry of Labour

Ministère du Travail

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 12 October 1993

The committee met at 1555 in room 151.

## MINISTRY OF LABOUR

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to convene the standing committee on estimates. Although not on Hansard, we've been experiencing some technical difficulties, which accounts for our little bit of a late start, but we have agreement to make up the time to hopefully complete the estimates of the Ministry of Labour today. We have approximately two hours and 30 minutes remaining.

When we last left in the rotation, we would move to the official opposition. I'd like to recognize Mr Mahoney, but before I do that, the deputy, Mr Thomas, has some brief comments about some of the questions that remained unanswered when we last met. Those are also in print form and will be circulated to the members momentarily. Mr Thomas, briefly.

**Mr James R. Thomas:** I wanted to very quickly go through some of the questions we didn't have answers to. One of them was how much was spent on the task force on the organization of work. The task force is a Premier's Council activity. The amount of money spent so far by the task force is \$64,991 in the fiscal year 1992-93, and to the end of September of this fiscal year, \$45,748.

The Ministry of Labour and the Premier's Council secretariat are providing staff support to the task force. MOL staff members are not included in the above figures. I also note that up to 70 representatives of business, labour and the academic and consulting communities all gave their time voluntarily over the past 18 months at no cost to the province.

The work organization service being developed, worked on and consulted on by this ministry has not received any money. The cost of preparing the discussion paper and for conducting consultations has been absorbed within the ministry's current budget.

There was a question that was raised about the amount of money spent on Bill 40 and the additional expense. So far, the budget for the startup costs was \$4.009 million. The annualized impact of Bill 40 in the out years for 1994-95 is \$2.660 million, and for 1995-96 is \$2.542 million.

I was asked to confirm the average amount of a claim under the employee wage protection program. I had guesstimated that the average amount of the claim was something in the order of \$3,500. I can report to the committee that that in fact is the average amount of the claim. The average amount of money actually paid out, though, is less than that because some people who claim

under the wage protection program claim more money than they're eligible for. The average amount paid out is \$2,400.

We were asked questions about the questionnaires that were distributed by the Workplace Health and Safety Agency with the September 30 deadline. I indicated that about 5,000 questionnaires had been returned, and that is correct. I was also asked how many responses were anticipated still to come. We don't have an answer to that. What I can tell the committee is that there were 24,000 questionnaires mailed out.

Then there was a question around the costs of the certification training program at the health and safety agency. I have a page that I would propose to simply table with the committee that talks about the basis under which the various pricings were set for the agency.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Thomas. Mr Mahoney, if we could please proceed with you.

**Mr Steven W. Mahoney (Mississauga West):** On page 208 of the estimates, where we get into the ministry administration program, I'm assuming that this is because this document was printed prior to the rollback of MPPs' wages of 5.5%, but maybe you can just confirm. The line under "Minister's Salary, the Executive Council Act" shows no change in 1992-93 over 1993-94. In your salary as a minister, it shows \$31,749 being constant, even back to 1991-92. Was the legislation that we passed prior to the break which rolled back the wages of MPPs by 5.5% also apply to a minister's salary under the Executive Council Act?

**Hon Bob Mackenzie (Minister of Labour):** It sure as hell did. I noticed a difference of—I was going to tell you. I forget what the figure was now, but my wife reminded me very quickly when she saw it.

**Mr Mahoney:** Well, it looks like about \$1,500, I would think, on top of the MPP's salary. I just wanted to make sure, because that isn't reflected in the documents that are part of the public domain. We can now say that particular issue's in Hansard officially.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** My wife wants to form a union for MPPs.

**Mr Mahoney:** I'm not surprised. Probably Bill 40 might help her do that.

**Interjection:** That's what it's all about.

**Mr Mahoney:** We know that that's what it's all about. I also note there's an increase in the parliamentary assistants' salaries of \$9,808; I'm assuming that's a result of you having two parliamentary assistants instead of the customary one.



**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I believe that's the case, yes. If not, there could be somebody here who could answer it.

**Mr Thomas:** That's the answer.

**Mr Mahoney:** Can you tell me how you would allocate duties to the two parliamentary assistants? Having been one myself in the former government, the duties were quite clear, but I don't know how you would split this up. I presume this would be your decision, Minister, as opposed to the deputy's or administrative staff within the Ministry of Labour. I presume you would call the two together and ask one to carry a bill or do other things. Can you tell me how that workload is allocated? Is it really necessary to have two PAs?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** In my opinion it would be, over the next year or two in particular, extremely useful. The way I broke it down was fairly simple: One of the PAs is responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, and that can be a job unto itself, and the other one deals with other labour issues, basically, that we are dealing with in the House.

**Mr Mahoney:** So you have one parliamentary assistant specifically responsible for WCB.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I wouldn't say there's not some other jobs that might be done from time to time, but essentially that was the clear understanding, that one would be working on workers' compensation and the other one would deal with other labour matters.

**Mr Mahoney:** I guess I've been led to believe by some of your answers in the Legislature and other comments that workers' comp is a bit of an arm's-length situation from you as the minister. In relationship to the building, you seemed to indicate that was clearly their decision, not yours, that you didn't have input or influence into that in relationship to other things they've done. I'm curious about why you would have a political parliamentary assistant assigned to workers' compensation if in fact it is arm's length.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think they're arm's length, but the responsibility does come back and they report back to the ministry. Anybody that's been working on WCB problems or cases for the last few years can recognize the difficulties that are there and the restructuring we're currently trying to go through with the WCB.

**Mr Mahoney:** So they're dealing directly with the WCB board as opposed to dealing as an advocate with cases or any of that nature?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Well, not dealing as an advocate on cases, but they would sit in at the meetings we have with the board. My own office is still dealing with the advocacy role, except that we can no longer make appeals.

**Mr Mahoney:** The issues of mediation and arbitra-

tion: You have specific offices established to deal with each of those issues. Correct me if I'm wrong, but my impression is that mediation would be less confrontational than arbitration, that arbitration would simply occur at a point of no return in labour negotiations or a point where a decision was not reachable, and mediation would seem to be a softer process that would bring those two sides together and try to resolve the outstanding differences. Yet the office of mediation is expecting a 22% increase in the number of mediation meeting days in the upcoming year, implying that the ministry is expecting perhaps a higher level of labour unrest this year compared to last, and the preventive mediation days are apparently expected to fall by 30% compared to mediation days increasing over the same period last year.

I guess what I'm getting at is that you've got a substantial cut, if I look at the figures correctly, of \$902,000 in the office of mediation and yet an increase in arbitration of \$418,000, at a time when you're expecting dramatic increases in mediation and substantially lower increases—I saw the figure somewhere of something like 6% or 8%—in the arbitration. Are you expecting some kind of major change here because of increased labour unrest to have more arbitration cases going and fewer mediation, and if so, why does your ministry reflect the opposite of that?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think I'm going to have the deputy respond on that one.

**Mr Thomas:** In fact the results data for the office of mediation show that while there may be a slight reduction in the number of days spent on preventive mediation, there's also an increase in the amount spent on mediation-conciliation. We think the office of mediation is going to continue to be pressed hard on not just its conciliation-mediation role but also on preventive mediation. We've been running a program called Relationships by Objectives; we've been running a number of preventive mediation programs that have been well received. I don't think the fact that we are seeing a continued demand for mediation-conciliation and preventive mediation should be interpreted as us expecting an increased level of labour unrest.

**Mr Mahoney:** But if I could just point out, the number of preventive mediation days is expected to fall by 30%. That's not minor; that's pretty dramatic. If the mediation and conciliation budget is being slashed, are you saying there will be more work done in the office of arbitration to take up that slack because you don't need the money? Yet you continue to say that you're expecting a lot more in the area of mediation and conciliation.

**Mr Thomas:** There's a chart that shows, over the last four years, mediation-conciliation meeting days and preventive mediation days. If you look at 1992-93, the combination of both of those days is in the order of

4,600 days. If you look at the total estimate for mediation-conciliation and preventive mediation for the current fiscal year, we're estimating 5,100. In other words, we're estimating an increase in the amount of work. When these estimates were put together, there was an expectation that there would be a demand on mediation and conciliation in the range of 4,200, and what would be left over in terms of our resource capability would be applied to preventive mediation, and that's 900 days.

Mr Gardner's here from labour-management services. Would you like to add to what I've said?

**Mr Mahoney:** Maybe Mr Gardner could also tell me if it's accurate that you're expecting a 22% increase in the number of mediation days next year over last.

**The Chair:** Maybe Mr Gardner could properly introduce himself to the committee.

**Mr Paul Gardner:** Paul Gardner, director of the office of mediation, labour-management services.

In answer to your second question, are we projecting an increase in the number of conciliation and mediation days over last year, yes, we are, the main reason for that being that although the number of work stoppages and in fact maybe the number of applications for service has decreased, the degree of involvement has become more intensive because of the state of the economy and the types of issues we're now dealing with. They take longer and more days, more hours, to resolve.

The situation with preventive mediation, the projected downward trend, I think as the deputy had answered, we project on the basis of what the dispute situation will be, and hopefully we'll have resources over and above, if we're off a little bit on our projections there, additional resources, to put towards preventive mediation.

1610

**Mr Mahoney:** Maybe I'm not making myself clear. My opening remarks about the difference between the mediation level and the arbitration level—my feeling would be that mediation would be a less confrontational situation and one that hopefully you would resolve well in advance of a threat of strike. In some cases this would be in a situation where a right to strike was not possible, which I also want to get into in relationship to the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act legislation that's coming up.

But you're holding 22% more mediation days in 1993-94 over 1992-93, and the office of arbitration expects to complete 8% more assignments over that same period, yet you're cutting the amount of money allocated to Mr Gardner's operation by 15%, while the amount going to arbitration is increasing by 15%. My point is that there appears to be a substantial projected increase in mediation hearings, with a substantial reduction in those costs, and totally the opposite in arbitration.

I can't balance those two competing interests within the ministry to understand how you can justify or accept—it's not up to you to justify; you get it passed on. Let me be point blank: Do you have concerns about your section's ability to function properly with the dramatic increases of 22% and a 15% cut in your line?

**Mr Gardner:** No, we don't. It would be nice if we were in a position to not face those reductions in resources. Part of the thing that probably doesn't show up—in fact it doesn't show up in here—is that there was a third operation within labour management services called the office of collective bargaining information. Administratively, that operation was absorbed or merged with the office of mediation, which resulted in a significant saving in terms of administrative costs and that type of thing.

**Mr Mahoney:** How many staff did that eliminate? Do you know?

**Mr Gardner:** Approximately 15, but that part of it did not have to do with the administrative savings.

**Mr Mahoney:** So you have a 22% increase in mediation days, and that staff that you lost was not part of your grouping.

**Mr Gardner:** No.

**Mr Mahoney:** How many staff, as a result of Bill 48, are you losing, and how are you going to handle the increase in the mediation days with the reduction of that staff?

**Mr Gardner:** Do you mean with regard to Bill 40?

**Mr Mahoney:** Bill 48, the social contract.

**Mr Gardner:** We did not lose any staff with regard to Bill 48. The staff has remained static. We don't believe there will be, in the long run, a significant reduction in terms of negotiations or mediation assistance needed, either direct mediation or preventive mediation in the public sector. Although it slowed down the March period, it is showing a trend for public sector now to pick up and increase—not increase, but go back to normal.

**Mr Mahoney:** Did you not lose any staff days as a result of the social contract?

**Mr Gardner:** No. Do you mean in terms of full-time equivalents? No.

**Mr Mahoney:** So you were allowed to remain static and to maintain your staffing levels and the hours that they work as opposed to other sectors in the public sector which are being forced to take 12 days off.

**Mr Gardner:** If you're talking in terms of—I thought you meant loss of actual staff.

**Mr Mahoney:** No, I said "staff days." I said, first, "staff" and then, second, "staff days."

**Mr Gardner:** I'm sorry. We're fully affected by the social contract.

**Mr Mahoney:** You have an increase in mediation



days, yet you're losing staff days, staff time. How are you going to fill this up? Are you going to bring in part-timers? Are you going to work overtime? What are you going to do? Presumably, you're not sitting around. I assume you're busy.

**Mr Gardner:** Yes, we are. But I would say that we will endeavour to do the best we can with the resources that we have. To date we have not had a great deal of difficulty in meeting our obligations to the clients, and hopefully we can continue to do that.

**Mr Mahoney:** Okay, thanks.

I want to just ask about the CECBA reform. Maybe to the deputy, do you have any idea of what the increased case load for the Public Service Labour Relations Tribunal and the crown employees Grievance Settlement Board might be because of CECBA? Have you analysed that kind of impact?

**Mr Thomas:** In terms of the labour relations tribunal, we do not expect that there will be a case load increase because there's an agreement that the matters that would have been adjudicated by the labour relations tribunal, particularly in the area of essential services, will be adjudicated by the OLRB, by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. So the board is taking on the responsibility for administering the provisions of CECBA that normally one would have expected to be handled by the public service labour relations tribunal. Indeed, we see the phasing out of the public service labour relations tribunal over the next couple of years. They will essentially work their way through the existing backlog or the workload of cases that they have.

It's very hard to predict what will happen with the Grievance Settlement Board. On the one hand, having an expanded scope of bargainable issues raises the spectre of them having a higher workload. On the other hand, a large part of the workload of the GSB has resulted from classification grievances and it is my understanding that the social contract negotiations with the Ontario public service included a moratorium on classification grievances. How the details of that will be worked out isn't known at this point, but to the extent that classification grievances become a smaller volume, that will substantially impact the other way on the Grievance Settlement Board's workload.

**Mr Mahoney:** I guess many of the—two minutes? How'd I get to 20 minutes so fast?

**The Chair:** Eighteen minutes ago you started.

**Mr Mahoney:** I see. I guess we'll get another go-round in here, so I'll save my health and safety questions till later.

**The Chair:** A couple, if we hurry up.

**Mr Mahoney:** The right to strike coming into the civil service: Do you anticipate any concerns, particularly in relationship to Bill 48 and the impact in 1996

when it sort of comes off and the right to strike is all of a sudden available under CECBA, could we be facing province-wide strikes in pretty vital sectors?

**Mr Thomas:** The right to strike will be available to the bargaining unit and lockout to the employer as soon as CECBA is passed. Therefore it is expected that there will be at least a round of bargaining or two under the new CECBA rules during the last two years of the term of this government. So that's expected to be a thing that will happen anyhow.

The problems you've alluded to about what will happen in 1996 when the restrictions on collective bargaining come off is going to be germane to a whole bunch of organizations, not just the Ontario public service, but there will be bargaining happening over the next three years between the government and OPSEU over a variety of non-salary issues, particularly the issues that have come to be bargainable and are not bargainable under current CECBA.

**Mr Mahoney:** You don't feel that you're facing some pretty severe problems that should be analysed in advance of CECBA? It's primarily around—I think the minister got it—the essential services that my concerns lie. How are we going to deal with that? Is there going to have to be further legislation dealing with essential services if we find ourselves in a very difficult position with all of these unions?

**Mr Thomas:** If there's one issue that's been talked out at length between the Ministry of Labour, Management Board and OPSEU it is the issue of essential services, it is the issue of how you find a balance between giving the bargaining agent a meaningful right to strike on the one hand and, on the other hand, making sure that essential government services continue to happen. People have worked very hard to attempt to achieve that balance through a number of mechanisms within CECBA, including the fact that the parties are to sit down and discuss and negotiate essential services before bargaining and certainly, in any event, before a strike can happen. One of the tests that will be applied if they can't reach an agreement on what is the proper level of essential services is, what will ensure meaningful collective bargaining in a context of wanting to making sure that you also have essential services? I think we have, in the mechanisms within CECBA, some very effective mechanisms, and some of them, I think, will work very, very well to make sure that we're able to provide a level of essential services while at the same time having a meaningful right to strike.

1620

**Mr Gary Carr (Oakville South):** Minister, you said that one of your parliamentary assistants has a responsibility for the WCB. What is the mandate of that parliamentary assistant? What is their primary function and role? Could you outline it for us, please?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Just a monitoring of the



situation at the board, the complaints that we get, the changes that may or may not deal with some of the problems and generally to be on top of the situation as it develops at the board.

**Mr Carr:** One of the questions I get in my critic's role for Economic Development and Trade is the whole issue of the unfunded liability. There have been lots of figures bandied about, everything from the Premier's Labour-Management Advisory Committee figures to the present unfunded liability. One of the questions I've got is, what are you going to do with the unfunded liability? What's your plan to deal with it?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** We alone won't make that decision. It's a decision not as yet made. It's one of the things that has been put to the PLMAC, which has a team of top management and top labour people to ascertain whether or not they can come up with two or three main answers to some of our problems: a governance issue, an unfunded liability issue and one or two of the other issues that have been plaguing the board for some time. Once they come in with their recommendations, which is not too far down the road, then we'll have to see the extent that we've got a buy-in and whether we do have an agreement from the joint labour-management group that's agreed to take a look at it.

**Mr Carr:** I appreciate that they're going to offer you some advice. What do you see being done and what would you like to see done?

You've been minister now three years. The unfunded liability's continued to rise. I remember when I asked the chairman, when he came in, what he planned to do with the unfunded liability. I think his idea was—he said, "After the first year, we might have an idea of when we might have a plan." Obviously he hasn't come up with much of a plan; neither has the vice-chair.

I guess the real question comes down to what you plan on doing with it, because, as you know, the people who are going to be affected by the unfunded liability, the people who are on the hook for it, are the injured workers. I'd like to ask you what your plans are. Notwithstanding that you might get some good information from some of the other people, what would you like to see done, as the man who's ultimately going to be in charge of dealing with it?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** There's no question in my mind that it's an issue that has to be dealt with. It's probably the main issue raised on the management side of board activities. But I'm not prepared to make any comments until I see what we get back from the PLMAC that's currently looking at it.

**Mr Thomas:** Could I just add to that?

**Mr Carr:** Yes, sure.

**Mr Thomas:** The other aspect of it, besides awaiting the report from the PLMAC, is the fact that there has been an improvement in the rate of growth of the

unfunded liability. I think the common parlance is that the unfunded liability is growing at \$100 million a month. That was the situation a couple of years ago. At the present time, the unfunded liability is growing at something less than \$40 million a month. So the degree of the problem is reducing—which, by the way, doesn't take away the seriousness of having to confront the problem, but steps have been taken to start to curb the rate of growth of the unfunded liability.

One of the things we would be hoping that the PLMAC would try to confront on a consensus basis between business and labour are ways that we could begin to achieve greater savings at the Workers' Compensation Board.

**Mr Carr:** Let me ask you this then: Since you have got it down to only \$40 million a month now, which of course is still far too high, how have you been able to do it? Is there anything we can learn from the way you've done it? How did we get it down to \$40 million then? What is the reason you've been able to do that, in a nutshell? How come you've gone from \$100 million to \$40 million?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The deputy may have some answers that I don't, but I can tell you that there's been a very rigorous exercise at the board, and questions in the meetings they have with me every month as to the administration and the management costs at the board and there has been an improvement there, so it's an issue that's foremost on the agenda almost every session.

**Mr Thomas:** There's also been a reduced injury rate.

**Mr Carr:** As to the cost we're looking at, what percentage is paid out to individuals in the WCB? What percentage of the total cost would the WCB pay out to individuals?

**Mr Thomas:** Do you mean, what is the part that is not administrative expense?

**Mr Carr:** Yes.

**Mr Thomas:** I'll have to get back to you on that.

**Mr Carr:** It would be fairly small though, I would think, right?

**Mr Thomas:** Yes.

**Mr Carr:** In other words, we've got it down to \$40 million by cutting out the management costs, but it would appear, not to sound too negative, that you've got a lot of the management costs out of it. Do you see our being able to get it down by having any more management costs taken out? If not, what are some of your other thoughts that need to be done? If management costs are only a small portion of it and you've cut them out now, how do you see us getting the rest, that we need the other \$40 million a month at least?

**Mr Mahoney:** Cut out more jobs.

**Mr Thomas:** I think one of the most significant

issues that presents a win-win potential for business and labour, for government and for the workers' compensation system is trying to find ways to get more workers back to work sooner and in larger numbers. Nothing will improve the health of the workers' compensation system better and faster and be able to do so by way of maybe consensus views from business and labour than trying to find more creative ways, more effective ways to get more injured workers back to work, and get more of them back to work sooner than they currently are getting back to work.

**Mr Carr:** What are some of the creative and effective ways in which you're going to do that?

**Mr Thomas:** That is the point on which I need to be very clear, that this is one of the main issues the Premier's Labour-Management Advisory Committee is looking at. I would not want to pre-empt the thinking that's going on in that committee.

**Mr Carr:** But they need to be creative and effective, right, that is what you're saying?

**Mr Thomas:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Rehabilitation and return to work have been clearly outlined to us as two of the major effective cost savings, and two of the answers or partial answers to the problem of the underfunding as well.

**Mr Carr:** Let's look at the other issue, the Premier's Labour-Management Advisory Committee. One of the concerns is that it's dominated by some of the large industries—you know the statistics; it's the small employers that are in fact creating the jobs—and that we are going to go to a uniform assessment rate and that the ones that are going to be affected would be some of the smaller companies. This is a question I guess to the minister: Is the board right now examining a uniform assessment rate proposal?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The assessment rates are being examined currently and we've kept a control on them over the last couple of years. The makeup of the PLMAC: At the moment we don't have an awful lot of control over that. When we put together a list of the most serious and common complaints, and whether or not there was something we could do about it—there has long been a call for a royal commission as well at the board—we sat down with both the representatives of the Premier's Council of labour and management and simply talked to them and discussed, and asked them if they would take on the job, which is fairly daunting, of coming up with some positive recommendations.

I didn't want to proceed to the royal commission route unless we had tried to see whether in working together, management and labour could resolve some of the problems that were there.

I must confess that I was a little bit surprised that when we made the proposition to them, both sides, after

discussing it, went away and discussed it themselves for a couple of weeks, came back and said they were willing to undertake it. But as I say, we don't appoint, at least I don't appoint the people who sit on the Premier's Council, and it's right; the people who are on the committee are largely pretty senior executive members, as they are from the union side.

1630

**Mr Carr:** Since you, Minister, are going to be the one who ultimately has the final decision, what are your thoughts on the uniform assessment rate? Do you think there's any capacity to increase the rate any more on employers in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think any increase in rates, and that's one of the things the board has been dealing with, has got to be looked at very, very carefully, because you do have a concern as to what additional costs can be borne. I think there is probably some adjustment. That's one of the reasons they've been looking at the various classifications and categories that are going to have to be looked at seriously. They may be able to standardize some of the rates a little bit, and some of the classifications, in the deal.

**Mr Thomas:** It's my understanding, Mr Carr, that the board of directors of the Workers' Compensation Board has put forward a proposal—it's out for consultation—on the assessment rate issue. I think no one is more aware of the difficulties of increasing the assessment rates than the Workers' Compensation Board itself. It's looking at transition measures, including establishing a standard 1994 actual assessment rate for each rate group, and exploring appropriate rate change limits during the consultations; in other words, what are the maximum limits that you could allow to increase by in order to give some cap and some comfort to employers as you move to a different assessment rate system.

I could also add that the Premier's Labour-Management Advisory Committee—again, no one is more aware than the five CEOs of large companies who are on the PLMAC of the fact that they do not represent, among them, small business. They have gone through a number of initiatives. They've introduced a number of initiatives, including a committee that steers the process from the business side, which consists of 17 or 20 people representing all sizes and shapes of businesses and associations.

They have something in the order of 14 working groups looking at different issues that are part of the PLMAC process and they've held at least two meetings with large numbers of people showing up—by large numbers, I mean over 100 employers and employer associations showing up—to keep them informed of the progress that is being made and the issues that are being talked about at the PLMAC table.

**Mr Carr:** If I get this straight, we're looking at a



shortfall of about \$40 million per month. Are some of the assessments you've been looking at going to get us that number that we need or are we falling short? Obviously, that's what we need just to stem the tide. Is that what you're looking at doing, finding \$40 million a month in increased assessments to make up the unfunded liability? How close are we to making that? You said there's been some discussion. You looked at some of the rates and so on. What will we have to do with the rates to get that \$40 million that we need?

**Mr Thomas:** That isn't what I said. You would have to increase the assessment rates quite substantially to use assessment rates as the only way of stopping the growth in the unfunded liability. Increasing the assessment rates and reducing benefit levels are not at the top of the list that the PLMAC members are looking at. They're looking at ways of getting people back to work faster and things like that, which present savings that are win-win propositions for both sides. If I left you with the impression that the way to solve the unfunded liability is to increase the assessment rates, I want to correct that impression. It can't come from that kind of activity, because the amount of the assessment rate increase would be very large. It would be too big.

**Mr Carr:** You've got to do it some way. Either it comes out of, as you say, getting people back to work quicker and so on, or through assessments. I guess this question is to the minister. Percentage-wise, how would you like to see it, an increase to make up 10% of that, with 90% through better case management? How would you like to see the percentage break down?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** That's one of the major concerns, because when we pulled together the business and labour communities, they had slightly different priorities, although both sides agreed finally to look at each other's concerns there. I would find it difficult to make that kind of an assessment. The main concern is rehab and return to work rather than an increase in the assessments. The board itself has resisted that over the last two or three years. I think other suggestions have been thrown into the hopper, but at the moment, I want to hear what the recommendation is back from the PLMAC committee, which I think will be back within the next month or so, before I would give any preference at all.

**Mr Carr:** You said also, I think, to quote you, that any look at assessment would have to be done "carefully" is your word, and I wonder if the minister could provide any cost-benefit studies the board may have conducted on the introduction of some of the uniform assessment rates. Have any of those studies been done, and if not, why not?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I'd have to get an answer back from the board on that.

**Mr Carr:** But surely that would be the logical thing to look at doing. You haven't asked that question of the

ministry already: What would be the cost-benefit studies if we went to a uniform assessment rate? That hasn't come up in your discussions with the ministry? You haven't asked for that already?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I have found that the board reports have been fairly inclusive and that they have looked at a lot of things. They've looked at extending coverage. They've looked, as I say, at a number of different processes, but they haven't settled on any of them. Some of it I think was their own uncertainty as to just what they'd get away with in terms of dealing with the current economic situation out there, and that's one of the reasons why we made the effort to pull together the Premier's committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Carr. We'll be continuing in rotation and be back to you in a moment. Mr Cooper, you have a question, I can tell.

**Mr Mike Cooper (Kitchener-Wilmot):** I have several. We will try and work through the book here.

**The Chair:** What page are you on?

**Mr Cooper:** Page 26, on the audits. It says, "Initiatives: perform comprehensive audits, information systems audits and statutory audits within the ministry and its agencies (excluding the Workers' Compensation Board)." Why is the Workers' Compensation Board excluded?

**Mr Thomas:** The Workers' Compensation Board has its own audit function, and I believe the Workers' Compensation Board is also subject to its audit mechanisms being reviewed by the Provincial Auditor.

**Mr Cooper:** Then that's brought to the ministry?

**Mr Thomas:** Yes.

**Mr Mahoney:** And rejected.

**Mr Cooper:** And rejected. Annually?

**Mr Thomas:** My recollection is that the recommendations in the most recent report of the Provincial Auditor that dealt with the WCB head office were completely accepted and the Ministry of Labour is in the process of implementing them.

**Mr Cooper:** The next one is, I know that a number of members are receiving phone calls in their office about the Transitions program. One of the problems there is that there's concern that people aren't being trained for jobs that are available or they're being trained for jobs that aren't suitable to them. Are there any initiatives there to find appropriate jobs for people going through the Transitions program?

**Mr Thomas:** The Transitions program has recently been transferred to the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, but let me just make a few comments about that. You're right, there have been concerns about the Transitions program, which is a program that provides funding to people who wish to be retrained and provides tuition and other fees to them, to a ceiling, to a maximum.



One of the concerns that was expressed by a number of people was that the people who were applying for Transitions didn't necessarily end up with a program that best suited their needs, so what has recently been implemented into the Transitions program is a counselling mechanism, a review mechanism, that allows them to sit down with a counsellor as part of the Transitions process and discuss the kinds of training and the kinds of course work that would be most appropriate for them.

We think that will allow us to run a much more effective Transitions program in which the courses that people end up taking are the ones that are best suited for them. Up until we made that change, there wasn't an obligation on people signing up for Transitions to go through that kind of counselling. Some of them did; some of them didn't. We think this will make sure that everyone taking the Transitions program will have counselling that will make sure they're getting the most appropriate courses for them.

1640

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The counselling, I think, is an essential part of any of the training programs. We generally have run into the problem of just exactly what we should and can retrain people for. Some of the conventional training programs are not likely to be around in the numbers that they have been in the past. It's also one of the reasons why the total authority of the Transitions program was transferred to OTAB.

**Mr Cooper:** At our last meeting you were saying that under the expenditure control program, money would be cut back on research to the health and safety agency and that we might lose some programs. It's my understanding that there are a number of places that are doing research on their own. I did a tour of the University of Waterloo and was talking to the president there. He said in the kinesiology department they were doing repetitive strain injuries, and there was no funding coming from the government on that.

So is it quite possible that there won't be research lost, that there are other people working on some of the same things, like occupational disease, and that we won't be losing a lot of the research because of our cutbacks, that we'll just have to go and find out who else is duplicating what we're doing?

**Mr Thomas:** No, no. The fact that the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, as part of its expenditure control plan, was asked by the ministry and agreed to essentially cut out the money that we were transferring to it to be used for research does not mean that research in health and safety in the province of Ontario has ground to a halt. I think some institutions that were receiving grants—I think the total is about \$3 million that has been cut out—have written to the agency and to the minister, pleading a case to be reactivated.

Certainly the agency and the minister are looking at

whether anything can be done over the long term to accommodate them, but the fact remains that there's still an awful lot of health and safety research going on in the province of Ontario. Whether it be health and safety research that's conducted within the Ministry of Labour, the Industrial Disease Standards Panel, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety in Hamilton or the academic institutions that have industrial safety courses, there's still a lot of health and safety research going on. We would like to see, though, if there are some ways to reactivate some of the grants over the long term that we had to cut out because of expenditure control.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I'm in the process of talking to the people from both the University of Toronto and McMaster about their grants. When the programs were initially set up, they were set up also on the basis that they were to find alternative funding. They understand that, but where we can take a look at it and have the agency or one of the other ministries take a look at it, we're doing that. But I think there's a clear understanding that it wasn't an ongoing guarantee.

**Mr Cooper:** I believe my colleague Mr Wiseman has a question.

**Mr Wiseman:** I'd like to talk about the unfunded liability. Could you describe for me the method by which it was calculated and what the parameters are in terms of the projected percentage increase?

**Mr Thomas:** The unfunded liability essentially arises out of the fact that there are some thousands of people who are on permanent disability pensions and will be entitled to money during the course of their lives, and there is not enough money in the asset pool to cover off all the potential liability that exists there. It's my recollection that the total liability for workers' compensation is around \$17 billion and the amount that is covered by assets is something in the \$6-billion range. So there's an \$11-billion shortfall, if you will, or amount by which assets are less than the liabilities.

The unfunded liability, I think, has been calculated using standard parameters around CPI and salary rate per cent increases. I don't have those numbers at my fingertips. If you'd like, I could undertake to get the parameters under which it was calculated, but I think it was using standard actuarial data.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Once again, these figures are not exact, but they're close. When one of the previous governments undertook the first effort to deal with the unfunded liability in the province, there was about 32% of the bill covered. That improved, when they set the target also of 2014 to deal with the unfunded liability, to somewhere around 36% or 38%. It's dropped very slightly during the last couple of years of tough economic times again, but it's essentially still somewhat above the 32% that they started with.

**Mr Wiseman:** How much of the payout from the

WCB is done on the basis of income from employers and employees, what percentage yearly payout and what percentage is made up of—would it be made up of interest from the assets or would it be just the—

**Mr Thomas:** At the present time, in terms of a cash-flow situation, the revenue and expenditure picture is such that the board has to use most of its income from investments plus the revenue that it gets from employers to balance the books, if you will, to have enough to pay current in-year obligations. The total amount that gets spent every year is in the order of \$3 billion, so there's about \$2.6 billion that comes in from revenue from employers and about \$400 million that comes from accident fund investment income. That balances about the \$3 billion that gets spent on benefits and administration, and all the costs of the Workers' Compensation Board.

**The Chair:** I'd like to move to Ms Haeck, if I could.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** I'd like to move to a whole other topic. Obviously, workers' compensation is one we hear a lot about in our offices as well, but I wanted to deal with an issue that is somewhat local, and I'd like to turn to page 99. I'm referring to the fatal accident that happened on the Garden City Skyway, which sort of brings to mind some occupational health and safety issues.

I was looking through there and noticed that there was a pretty major change between 1991 and then 1992 in the number of investigations, and again, that the change between 1992 and 1993, estimated, appears to be somewhat more than, say, the previous two years, 1990 and 1991.

I would be interested in hearing, in light of that sort of local incident, what would lead you to believe that there would be this sort of need for increased investigations, and why the increased investigations for the previous two years.

**Mr Thomas:** First of all, the increase in investigations for 1993-94 is not as high percentage-wise as it was, for example, between 1991-92 and 1992-93.

**Ms Haeck:** Right.

**Mr Thomas:** One explanation for that, probably the biggest one, is the fact that there has been a reduced level of business activity in general in the province. My sense is that the estimate of 11,700-some-odd is a reasonably accurate estimate of what we think we'll be able to accomplish this year.

I should say that one of the things we're asking in our strategic planning exercise is the extent to which we are most effective doing investigations and inspections versus other ways of making sure that the workplaces are healthier and safer around education and training, and being more helpful to the workplace parties than simply going out there and doing inspections and

investigations. The health and safety inspector right now is doing both, is out there providing education and support to the workplace parties as it is doing investigations and inspections.

**Ms Haeck:** There seems to be quite a dropoff in the prosecutions, which is on the next page, and you foresee that there would even be a lowering of prosecutions. Is it again, as you indicated earlier, sort of a general downturn in the economy, the number of cases that sort of come before you, and then the compliance as a result sees that kind of—it's quite a major change from 1990-91 to see that major dropoff.

1650

**Mr Thomas:** Yes, I think that's a different explanation. The reason the prosecutions have dropped substantially is the fact that the Ministry of Labour has been targeting, in the last couple of years, the more serious health and safety offences and has been trying to limit its prosecution activity to the types of workplace practices that are most in need of sanctions of the kind you get through prosecutions.

We have been successful in securing some fairly substantial fines against a number of companies, in the order of a half-million dollars or more, and those have come at the price of volume. In other words, we've been focusing more on the quality of the prosecution rather than trying to get a large number. We've been advertising through news releases those situations where we have been able to secure prosecutions as a deterrent to others and as a lesson to others and to point out that we're serious about making sure that we do prosecute these kinds of very serious accidents that could be prevented.

The result is, though, that those are the more difficult ones, the more complicated ones. They take up a great deal more time both for the inspectorate and for the lawyers within the Ministry of Labour who prosecute them. I think that explains the reason why there's been such a substantial drop in the number of prosecutions over the last couple of years.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** In fact, the higher profile and the higher fines, one of the things we went after, seem to be having an effect. Whether it's the communication out there in the field or not, I don't know, but the early prospects seem to be encouraging with the new approach. It's one of the things we found we simply had to do, because once we toughened up the legislation a bit, we were finding that we just had a tougher team of lawyers to deal with on the part of some of the companies.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms Haeck. I'd like to move back to Mr Mahoney.

**Mr Mahoney:** Moving back to the workers' comp situation, Mr Deputy, you made a comment—I don't want to quote you exactly, but the inference was that workers' comp is in the process of implementing all the



recommendations in the Provincial Auditor's report. If I didn't understand you to say that, I'd like to be corrected. Is that basically what you said?

**Mr Thomas:** My recollection, Mr Mahoney, is that the Provincial Auditor's report had three major areas of concern. There were a number of recommendations, but they were lumped under three headings. What I can say to you is that the Ministry of Labour and the Workers' Compensation Board are working very closely together to develop a memorandum of understanding that would update the one that currently exists and has not been updated since, I guess, the early 1980s.

The intent of that memorandum of understanding is to capture, among other things, the concerns the auditor raised around adhering to the spirit of the sections of the Workers' Compensation Act that the auditor made reference to, including section 64. The Workers' Compensation Board, according to my discussions with it, is working on putting in place the kinds of conflict-of-interest guidelines that the Provincial Auditor thought should be in place. I believe they're in the process of putting together the responses that the auditor requested with respect to the value-for-money issues around the decision to build a building that was made back in 1990 or so.

**Mr Mahoney:** In essence, are you telling me that the board concurs that they did indeed violate the act in going ahead with the decision on the building without the approval of cabinet?

**Mr Thomas:** No, I'm saying to you that the board and the Ministry of Labour are working together to try to make sure we implement the recommendations of the auditor's report.

**Mr Mahoney:** Okay. I'm not trying to cross-examine you; I'm trying to understand. The auditor filed a report, and exception was taken to it by Brian King. He in fact, in another committee that I was present at, said he did not agree with many of the things in the auditor's report. At one time he even referred to it as rhetoric. The issue around the broken rules or allegedly broken rules has to do with the term "acquisition for their own use." As I recall, the section basically said they required cabinet approval if they were going to acquire real property for their own use. They've sort of got around that. I guess the board decision was, "Well, we're only leasing it." Even though they are a joint partner in the deal, they are also a tenant. The auditor clearly felt that the rules at best were skirted, if not broken. Mr King strongly and publicly disagreed with the Provincial Auditor and said so.

We now have a letter on record from the Provincial Auditor taking exception to the remarks made by Mr King in those committee hearings. That issue I believe was raised in the Legislature last week, and we're awaiting the specifics of the Provincial Auditor as to where his concerns lie, because he's waiting for the

final copy of Hansard to come out. But we're expecting a letter from the auditor expressing his dissatisfaction with Mr King's comments.

I perhaps somewhat flippantly said that the auditor's report was rejected, which led to your comment that the auditor's recommendations were being implemented. I just don't see that happening. In fact, if anything, I see the auditor's recommendations for some kind of an investigation into the decision on the building—notwithstanding the fact that the building's going ahead. I think everybody knows that. The contracts have been let and the deal has been signed. My remarks to Mr King, in the hearings we had in the summer, were that hopefully we could avoid this kind of bad decision being made—or decision, good or bad, being made—in violation of rules that are laid down very specifically with a requirement for cabinet approval for acquisition.

How they can hide behind the fact that they're the main tenant and therefore they're not acquiring it for their personal use, and yet they are a joint venture partner along with Cadillac Fairview and the Toronto-Dominion Bank in the project, is absolutely beyond me. Mr Di Santo could not answer that question at committee and Mr King could not answer that question. In fact, I won't put words in Mr King's mouth, but he certainly left me with the impression that he had some sympathy for that position.

But there's very clearly not what I would call an atmosphere of cooperation between the Provincial Auditor and the Workers' Compensation Board. There may well be with the Ministry of Labour, but there clearly is not one between the Workers' Compensation Board and the auditor, and I don't see it accepting the auditor's recommendations at all. If that were the case, I think we'd be heading into a hearing or at least an all-party committee to look at how that decision was arrived at.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Also, I think some of the recommendations of the auditor were so that we would not again run into the kind of situation we've had here. We are, and the board is, trying to comply with most of the recommendations the auditor made. I'm not going to speak for either of the two, the current management team or the previous management team at the board, but I do know that the very first briefing I had when I walked into the Ministry of Labour's office was with some of the previous board members, who indicated that this issue had been discussed and that they had legal opinions, I think three of them, as to the accuracy of the move they were making. I think probably from Mr King's point of view it's an accurate statement as well. They might have looked at another approach, but the feeling certainly was that it was going to cost us plenty to get out of the arrangements that had already been made and that they did have a legal opinion on it. That's the best answer I can give you.



**Mr Thomas:** I think it's important to distinguish between the recommendations that came out of the auditor's report and the auditor's findings that gave rise to those recommendations. Maybe I should have been more precise. What I'm saying to you is that the Ministry of Labour has every intention of complying with the recommendations of the auditor's report as they pertain to the Ministry of Labour, and it's my understanding that the Workers' Compensation Board has every intent of complying with the recommendations in the auditor's report.

1700

The recommendations deal with such things as: The board is required to justify to the Minister of Labour why the decision it took in 1990 was a good decision, and it is working on that. It was asked to implement conflict-of-interest guidelines that deal with making sure we keep decisions around the accident fund separate from decisions around administrative matters. The board is required to report back, I've forgotten the year, but in a couple of years on the results of the construction and some indication of whether or not this was good value for money. Again, I'm paraphrasing; I don't have the report in front of me.

**Mr Mahoney:** Nor do I.

**Mr Thomas:** And we were asked to put together an MOU with the board.

Those were the four things that stand out in my mind as being recommendations that the auditor made. The WCB, in its response contained in the auditor's report, and the Ministry of Labour, in its response, have agreed that the WCB will do those things that are recommended by the auditor. Now, that is different from points of view that may or may not have come out around whether everyone agrees completely with all of the findings the auditor used to come up with the recommendations he came up with.

**Mr Mahoney:** I think one of the areas the auditor is particularly upset at was the statement, and it's in Hansard, by Mr King wherein he said that he asked the auditor for his legal opinion and was refused that legal opinion. The fact is that the auditor is prohibited from sharing working notes on decisions he arrives at; he's prohibited by legislation. He cannot even share those working notes with members of the Legislature.

Secondly, Mr King did not at all ask the auditor for a copy of his legal opinion, which ran contrary, according to the auditor's report, to the legal opinions that were obtained by the board. He had some staff person request it, at which time that staff person was informed that, by law, the auditor is not allowed to share such information.

It's hard for either you, Deputy, or the minister, I suppose—harder for the deputy than it is for the minister. Perhaps it should be the minister's responsibility to answer for statements like that made by Mr King. But

I find that when there's a difficulty answering a question about workers' comp, it quickly becomes an arm's-length agency. When there's an easy answer available, they almost become part of the Ministry of Labour.

**Mr Thomas:** No, but you've given more specifics around what you think the auditor is concerned about than anything we've heard.

**Mr Mahoney:** Well, King heard it.

**Mr Thomas:** The auditor has not given specifics, and has undertaken to do so, as you point out, when he gets the final version of Hansard, as to what it is that bothered him about Mr King's testimony. I assume that matters will unfold after that happens. I don't know that the legal opinions or whatever are the issues that are of concern to the auditor.

**Mr Mahoney:** Not to be overly argumentative with you in your role as the deputy, but I interpreted your comments that the Workers' Compensation Board was complying with the recommendations of the auditor; quite frankly, I find that not to be the case. The minister used the words "most of the recommendations." That may be an acceptable statement. But they are clearly in some kind of battle with the Provincial Auditor, whether it's over interpretation or wording or recommendations; I don't think that has been pointed out yet. The auditor has other concerns. That is only one area where those concerns exist in relationship to—and I went back and researched Hansard because much of this was as a result of my questioning in the committee to Mr King and Mr Di Santo around the building.

My point, which I think Mr King agreed with, was that if there is a requirement for the board to get cabinet approval, then it should darn well go and get it, regardless of which government's in power. They should not be allowed to be cute and use the fact that they're a tenant when they're a joint-venture partner in the deal, on the other hand. They should not be allowed to be cute and avoid—and I dare say I don't understand why they would try to go around the legislation. Hopefully, whether they're arm's-length or not at any given time, they recognize that their political master is the government of the day and that legislation can be adjusted or changed or brought in to hammer that point home, if need be.

I just make the point, not to belabour it, that I don't think they're complying at all with the Provincial Auditor's recommendations in his report or we would be in some kind of hearing mode on how that building was approved without the Minister of Labour's approval, without the cabinet's approval.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Let me make it very clear to you, Mr Mahoney, that I'm not speaking for the board—

**Mr Mahoney:** They're arm's length now.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** It's not a question of being

arm's length; they've reported back to us.

You know, I don't claim to be perfect either. I was satisfied at the very first meeting. I sat down with Mr Elgie and—I forget his name now, the chair of the board—got the recommendations. They were repeated at following meetings. If I were doing it over again, I'd do it a little differently. But I think they are following most of the recommendations that were in the report and that we probably would not have a similar situation again.

**Mr Mahoney:** I appreciate your candour on that. If that candour had been forthcoming from either Mr Di Santo or Mr King—even though Mr King wasn't here at the time and Mr Di Santo was simply a board member and not the chair at the time those calls were made. There's always a great deal to be gained, in my view, by a few mea culpas and admitting that there indeed would be—in fact, I asked that specific question, “Would you do it differently if you were doing it again today?” and their answer was no, they'd do the same darn thing. I just find that unacceptable. When the auditor's letter arrives detailing what, in addition to the point I've raised, his concerns are in relation to Mr King, I can assure you it's going to be raised in a very real sense.

I had hoped to get off workers' comp, but some of the questions are so important that I'll have to, if there's time, come to the health and safety issues in a moment. As I see it, there are four ways of dealing with the board's unfunded liability. The government has to give some direction. It's fine to tell the board to come in, but the government clearly is going to have to buy into some of these new ideas or changes. You, Minister, referred to some increasing in benefits that they've looked at; I know they've looked at stress in the workplace as a possible new category.

As I see it, there are four ways of dealing with it. One is reducing benefits to the injured workers, reducing the percentage that the injured workers would receive. The other you say is happening, and that is reducing injuries. I'd be curious as to whether or not that's as a result of the downturn in the economy and the downturn in jobs that would then lead to a downturn in people applying for workers' comp benefits simply because there's a smaller workforce out there. The other is to reduce the number of jobs in the province, not that anyone would want to do that consciously, but that will have an impact, without a doubt. The fourth one is rate increases.

Mr Carr raised the spectre of substantial rate increases coming in. It's a spectre, I can tell you, Minister, that not only big business, although it may be able to handle it with a little more ease, but small business particularly is deathly afraid that this is going to happen. I believe there is a rate increase computer proposal that's been put on hold for the time being. The

rumour is that the impact was so shocking that the board didn't feel it could come out with it, given the timing that exists with the economy. I guess they're hoping for some magical turnaround in the economy, so then they can whack some kind of major rate increase.

In fact, I refer to it more as a market value adjustment, in the sense that it's going to take some businesses that are currently paying  $x$  and increase them by a certain percentage, and take others that are paying  $y$  and decrease them. There'll be the old market value assessment debate that's gone on recently in Metro that will perhaps deflect it and create some supporters for the proposal because they're going to get reduced rates, but it's potentially going to decimate other people who are going to be facing massive increases.

1710

I don't know which way you want to go. I guess my questions would be, how do you feel about reduced benefits, can you tell me if the reduced injuries are a result of the economy or is there some report that shows huge increases to certain sectors and rates, and what are those sectors?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Before I give any response, you said there were four main approaches. I took down reducing benefits, reducing injuries and rate increases. Did I miss one?

**Mr Mahoney:** Reducing jobs was the fourth one, which I said was unacceptable, I'm sure, to all parties involved, but it may be a function that's out of your control.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I don't think I would tell you that any of them were absolutely out of the picture, but I don't think we're anywhere near a decision as yet. I personally have difficulty on reducing benefits, in most cases. We've got a specific case of older workers' pensions where probably the biggest single complaint we have is that older workers who are on a fixed pension have them based on the old salary levels and can come nowhere near meeting a living wage situation. They could be affected by such a move.

Reducing injuries: We're not, we feel, at the top of that as yet. As you know, there's a very extensive program going on in terms of the health and safety committees, one person from both sides in the plants, and the certification process going on. We think that will have some effect. We see the increased awareness of health and safety committees and joint committees as having some effect. I think, however, that a good chunk of what's happening so far is also the downturn in the economy, and I think anybody who didn't accept that just wouldn't be facing reality.

Rate increases are going to be difficult, but there are some adjustments that undoubtedly need to be made, and that's one of the reasons why they've realigned the various categories that people are in. In some cases there are some that are low and in some cases the



companies themselves admit it and there are some where they're high, and there will be probably room for some adjustments on it.

Reducing jobs, to the extent that we've got any control over it, has never been an option of mine.

**Mr Thomas:** Could I add to that that I think there's at least one way that is not on your list, and I think I made some reference to that, and that is reducing the duration time so that people get back to work more quickly and in larger numbers. That's certainly one of the areas where I think there's some opportunity for improvement. Some of the articles and literature indicate that that has more potential for saving money than many other activities, so I just thought I'd raise that with you. Also the fact that reducing administrative costs, making sure that you've got a program that minimizes fraud, those are the kinds of things that I think also can contribute to reducing the unfunded liability.

**Mr Mahoney:** Have you, Minister, taken a position on the issue of universal disability?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think our hope was that if the PLMAC could come up with some answers to the other difficult questions, that might more appropriately be the topic of a broader discussion.

**Mr Mahoney:** But you're personally not at a position where you're prepared to say your feelings in support or—

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I find the prospect interesting, but I'm not prepared to buy it until—

**Mr Mahoney:** Maybe the deputy would know this. Have there been studies done in relationship to the—let me put this another way. I think the attempts to take credit for reduced injuries, if they're legitimate, I'd like to see the stats through the program, or have there been any studies done that would say that out of the reduced injuries a substantial percentage or any percentage is related to the economy and to areas that are not directly controlled by workers' compensation, as opposed to better rehab or to health and safety, better training on the job site, committees etc?

**Mr Thomas:** I don't know the answer to that. I think it's a very good question. Could I get back to you? Could I get back to the committee on that, Mr Mahoney?

**Mr Mahoney:** Okay.

In relation to health and safety operations, I understand the ministry plans to cut funding to the operations branch of health and safety by 18%. I just wonder if there have been any estimates on workplace injuries and employment standards violation because of the reduced funding to this branch. You're also reducing the policy and regulations budget by 31% or \$1.2 million. So we've got a reduction in policy and regs, we've got a reduction in operations, and yet we're talking about

reducing injury on the job as a result of better work in health and safety. How do we relate sort of the slash-and-burn mentality on one side of the process with the statement that there's production in the sense of reduced injury on the other?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The deputy may answer this as well, but I'm not sure that I would accept the slash-and-burn. I know the consultation that's gone on throughout the ministry, both with the bargaining unit people, management people, and our senior staff in terms of where we can effectively improve our record and situation and what's going to have the least effect on us in terms of the cuts. I have no option in terms of the programs that we've entered into and the process we've entered into in cutting a substantial amount of money out of the Ministry of Labour budget.

The question is, how effectively can we do it without hurting services? That entered into things like employment standards. We took a look at whether or not we could maintain what has been improvement in the time frame it's taken to deal with those cases. Those kinds of discussions and decisions very much went into the decisions we've made in terms of cutting. I think it's been a positive effort at reducing costs and not a slash-and-burn. Forgive me for just taking some exception to that.

**Mr Mahoney:** I don't mind at all.

Workers' compensation, though, clearly is part of our social safety net in this province, regardless of how it's paid for. Mr Di Santo tried to imply that there were no tax dollars in the building, for example, which is absolutely ridiculous because the people who fund workers' comp are taxpayers. The health and safety issues clearly relate to the workers' compensation. So what we have here is a branch making more investigations than in previous years. Inspections are up by 9%, investigations by 6.6%, and they're expected to increase in 1993-94 as well. And yet, as one example, there are substantially fewer compliance orders being issued.

I'm just concerned. When you do cut a social program—and I accept the fact that you have no choice as the Minister of Labour. This is being dictated to you under the cuts by the government and you have to comply. But we need to keep a handle on what the impact is. So if you cut health care in the province, what is the impact of those cuts? We heard questions about the bone marrow transplants and the impact of that, and we're hearing other problems from hospitals in cutting down beds and cutting back nurse-intensive services etc. So the same thing applies here.

How can we determine? If there are more investigations and more inspections and fewer compliance orders, are they overlooking problems? Is morale so low in the ministry that they're just ignoring problems or saying: "To heck with you. You're going to lay me off 12 days. I'm not going to bother issuing a compliance order"? Is



there a real fallout that has occurred from the cuts? Whether you call it slash-and-burn or whether you call it government-directed reductions, there is clearly a reduction. Go through this book, Minister, and all over the place there are substantial reductions.

We in opposition can't call for you to cut the size of government on the one hand and then, "Don't cut here," and "Don't cut there." My point is, what is the impact? Are we measuring it? Are we quantifying it? Do we have a lot of unhappy people in the inspection section? And are we ultimately going to lead to greater problems in health and safety, and therefore greater problems in workers' compensation, which means an even greater unfunded liability? I don't mean to extrapolate beyond being reasonable, but I think that's a pattern that could develop.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The deputy will probably, because he's been in on some of the negotiations and discussions with the staff, respond as well, but let me tell you clearly that I don't think any staff is happy when there is the potential of reductions and when their job may be one of the jobs that could be on the line. But by the same token, I want to tell you that I don't think I have seen a more thorough and, as far as I'm concerned, a more professional effort than has been done by the senior people in the ministry. Some of it may be their backgrounds and the ministry they're involved with, I don't know, but as far as I'm concerned, there has been a real involvement in terms of the bargaining unit people.

1720

There has certainly been real involvement—I've been part of it—with the management group at the ministry, and I think the decisions that are being made are being recognized as those that take into account some of the concerns you've raised, that people are concerned about their jobs and they also have a responsibility and are still accepting the responsibility to get the job done, whether it's employment standards or health and safety. I have been quite pleased with the efforts that have been made in the ministry not only to keep people on side but to make sure we're doing the most effective job of managing the cuts that we have to make.

**Mr Thomas:** Could I add to that? I don't think it's possible to go through a downsizing of an organization and not have problems in terms of keeping people turned on to their jobs, morale problems and the like, so I'm not going to sit here and say that we have an absolutely 100% well-motivated workforce, having just gone through a downsizing of some 208 jobs, 113 permanent jobs, of people whom we are trying to redeploy and find other jobs for.

What I can say to you is that this ministry has worked extraordinarily hard over the last couple of years to try to build a culture within the ministry that deals with results and that is based on respect and trying

to make sure we treat the human resources within the ministry seriously and that we also treat the customer service issue seriously. So when we went through the expenditure reduction in April—and I don't have the figures that would line up exactly with the ones that are in the book, because I've got mine broken down by what happened when we implemented the expenditure control plan in the first year of the multi-year expenditure reduction plan.

What I can say to you is that we cut direct service by only 7%, we cut program administration and program support by 21.3% and we cut transfer payments by 16%. You're right, we didn't go out and ask for the numbers, but having been given a target of \$35 million to hit, we did it in a way that maximized customer service and minimized the impact on the front-line staff.

I would characterize it as anything but slash-and-burn. We put in place a redeployment process, a committee structure, a joint structure with OPSEU. We've worked very hard to place people, we've put in place a number of training programs for managers, we've put in place training programs for people who want to be redeployed into some other kind of job. We've been successful in placing all but 50 of the 113 of the people who were given surplus notices back in April, and we're working very hard to minimize that number.

So I'm not suggesting that we have a totally motivated workforce, but I do think that we are doing everything you would want a ministry to do in terms of finding ways to manage as effectively as it can through these difficult times.

**The Chair:** Mr Mahoney, you're at the end of your cycle. One final comment.

**Mr Mahoney:** The real issue that I raised, with due respect, wasn't answered by either one of you, and that is the issue of the fallout and the potential fallout from the cuts. What is the actual impact on this social service known as workers' compensation through the reductions—you call them what you will, and I respect that—of 18% in the health and safety division? How will they pay for this, when they have increased activity in the area of inspections etc? My question is, are we carefully analysing this as to whether or not the cuts will lead in the end to increased costs in workers' compensation as a result of the cuts in health and safety and therefore an increased cost in the unfunded liability? That was really my question. I could have been more succinct, but that's the issue I'm concerned with.

**The Chair:** I thank you very much, Mr Mahoney. Mr Carr.

**Mr Mahoney:** Obviously the Chairman isn't.

**The Chair:** No, I thought it was excellent. I just—

**Mr Mahoney:** He wanted to answer.

**Mr Thomas:** The answer is yes.

**The Chair:** I thought it was excellent. The deputy

wanted to comment again, but I would like to move to the Conservative caucus.

**Mr Carr:** Thank you very much. I'll ask a couple of questions and then turn it over to Ted.

I want to get back to the studies conducted on the introduction of uniform assessment. I want to be clear with the minister. While I understand you don't have any of the studies with you, I gather that you don't know whether a study has been done. I find it strange that we've got a minister, a deputy minister and quite a few of the staff here and we can't get a simple answer, yes or no, whether a study has been done. I'm not asking for the studies today. You said you'd get into it, but my question is, has any study been done, and if not, how come? Nobody within the ministry who's here, which is the most senior official, can tell me if one has been done.

**Mr Thomas:** What sort of study are you talking about?

**Mr Carr:** The studies I talked about earlier, conducted on the introduction of uniform assessment, any cost-benefit studies conducted on the introduction of the uniform assessment rate. Remember, in my questioning earlier, the minister said, "I don't know; I'll have to get back to you," and I took it from this that he didn't know. My question is, does the deputy know about any studies? Is there anybody else? Maybe they could come forward and let us know, since the minister doesn't know if there have been any studies done.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** There's been extensive discussion on the classification groupings at the board. That I know. Whether you call that a study in itself or not, I'm not sure.

**Mr Carr:** Okay, so a study's been done then and you're going to get it to us?

**Mr Thomas:** I don't know if there's been a cost-benefit analysis because I don't know that this is a cost-benefit analysis issue. We're talking about whether it is appropriate for the Workers' Compensation Board to move to a different assessment system and one that would be—

**Mr Carr:** Surely anything that you've looked at, you've done some studies on, and you've told me you looked at it. There must be some studies you're prepared to bring forward to this committee on what you've done. That's all I'm asking.

**Mr Thomas:** The fact of the matter is that we would not do the studies anyhow.

**Mr Carr:** So the ministry hasn't seen any? None has come forward to you at all as deputy, or to anybody else within the ministry? You haven't seen them?

**Mr Thomas:** I have not received a cost-benefit analysis of the assessment rates issue.

**Mr Carr:** Has anybody in the ministry received them?

**Mr Thomas:** I'll have to get back to you. I don't know the answer to that.

**Mr Carr:** Have you asked for them from the WCB?

**Mr Thomas:** No.

**Mr Carr:** If not, why not?

**Mr Thomas:** First of all, we would only ask for the study if we thought there was a particular problem with the plan that was being implemented by the Workers' Compensation Board. Secondly, it is the kind of activity, the setting of assessment rates, that would seem to me to be central to the mandate of the Workers' Compensation Board. There is no group that has more expertise to deal with the appropriate levels of assessment rates than people at the Workers' Compensation Board.

**Mr Carr:** Let me ask you from another standpoint then, because the impact is going to affect businesses, and the WCB may look at it from simply the \$40 million unfunded liability. I'll ask this to the minister: Has the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade given you, as a minister, any advice on what should happen with regard to the assessment rates? Have they talked to you or spoken to you about the assessment rates, because they are obviously the ones who are presumably out there trying to protect the job creators in this province, and has that ministry talked to you about the assessment rates and said to you, "We don't believe there can be any increase in any assessments"?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Mr Carr, specifically, there hasn't been a briefing or message to us from the ministry that you're referring to.

**Mr Carr:** Okay. Is it your intention to increase the number of industries? For example, there have been some rumours that you're going to include, for example, financial services and so on. Is that your intention, Mr Minister?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** That's the increased coverage issue and that's an issue that's been on the table for a long time. There has been no decision made on that at all.

1730

**Mr Carr:** One final question and then I'll turn it over. There's been a lot of talk about the fraud involved in the WCB. I'll ask this to the minister: What do you believe is the amount of fraud within the WCB system?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I haven't got the foggiest idea as to what the amount is. We know there are some problems with fraud.

**Mr Carr:** Don't you think that as a minister you should have a foggy idea of what it is in this day and age? You have no idea what the fraud is within the WCB system? Have you not asked that question? Here you are, the Minister of Labour, and you have, to quote you, "not the foggiest idea." Why not?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think it would be very



difficult to come up with. You hear figures of from 3% or 2%; you hear figures higher than that. We have gone through a specific fraud investigative process that's ongoing, and it's an issue that I am just not prepared to discuss at the moment.

**Mr Carr:** What have they told you? You say it's ongoing and they're looking at it. What are they saying? What are the figures they are talking to you about?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I just finished telling you that it's a process I'm not prepared to discuss at this point in time.

**Mr Carr:** Well, I would suggest to you, with all due respect, that for the Minister of Labour to have an answer that he doesn't have the foggiest idea is not appropriate. With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague Ted.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I just came in, as you know, Minister, about 10 minutes ago, so if any of the questions I may ask have been duplicated earlier, I hope you'll bear with me and help me out.

Some time ago, a couple of weeks ago, I guess, the Provincial Auditor wrote to the member for Mississauga South, my colleague who is Chairman of the standing committee on government agencies. That letter was dated September 29 and it was with reference to some comments Mr Brian King, vice-chairman of the board, made to the standing committee on public accounts.

I'll read you—and if you want me to repeat, I'll read you the quote twice—the comment from the Provincial Auditor. You may be familiar with this; I don't know. "The draft transcript of the September 15 meeting"—and this is the meeting of the government agencies committee, Minister—"contains certain testimony given by Mr Brian King, vice-chair of the board, relating to our report made to the standing committee on public accounts on the WCB's new headquarters which I consider either misleading or as factually incorrect."

My question to you, Minister, is, have you raised this issue with the vice-chair of the board, Mr King, about the auditor's statement, to inquire why this inaccurate statement, as is seen by the auditor, was made and what have you done about it?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I have not raised it with him. I have asked for a copy of the auditor's detailed report when he gives it to us, and at that time I'll be better able to assess what actions we might or might not take.

**Mr Arnott:** Does it concern you that this misleading statement may have been made and inaccurate information—

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I'm not going to respond to that comment on the deal either. It's an issue that is out in the public now. Had you been here earlier, it's been well discussed in this committee already today.

**Mr Arnott:** Do you intend to report back to the House with your findings in any way?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** That's going to be very dependent on what we see in the report.

**Mr Arnott:** I understand \$180 million is budgeted for the new building for the Workers' Compensation Board. Again, back to the Provincial Auditor's statement on the need for the new building, I'll read you a quote from the Provincial Auditor in his report: "In our opinion there was insufficient analysis of other alternatives by the Workers' Compensation Board to demonstrate that it is receiving good value for money by occupying and investing in the building. Analyses done were not designed to ensure that the best value-for-money option was selected."

You have received some degree of interest from a lot of people about the wisdom of this decision by the board, and I know you may have certain questions in your own mind about the wisdom of going ahead with that building, and I suppose more information will be forthcoming on that. But apparently you responded to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which has been very vocal in expressing concern about it. You said in a letter to them of September 7, "In my view the auditor's report confirms that the Workers' Compensation Board made a sound investment when it decided to relocate its head office to Simcoe Place."

Granted, I've isolated one quote out of the auditor's report, but it seems very clear that value for money was not a consideration, and I just can't understand how you would conclude in your response to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that it was a sound investment. I would like you to respond to that.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** My understanding is that the return on the board's investment is 13%, which I'm told matches some of their other investments. I'm not running their investment portfolio. There may be some question as to whether or not it was the best investment.

I also know, however, that we have a lease that's expiring at 2 Bloor, and I know that for at least 15 years—15, the entire 18½ years I've been in this House, we've had complaints about the ability of that building to adequately handle board activities.

Between the need to make a move and the difficulties with the current location, I think the board was in a position—and that was clearly what was passed on to me when I first took over in the ministry by the previous administration before the current one that we're referring to at the board: that they had to make some moves and that there was a time frame on it, that they had been working on a deal and that there were going to be some substantial costs involved if that was negated at this point in time.

That doesn't necessarily justify it all. Also, as I mentioned earlier during the testimony, there had been legal opinions given which clearly had a major impact on the decision to proceed that the board made. This is what was presented to me. Based on what's been



presented to me, I'm not sure that there could have been a better decision. We'll see what specific concerns are raised in the auditor's comments when we get the details.

**Mr Arnott:** Yes, I think there could have been a better decision too.

I've heard a lot of complaints about the Workers' Compensation Board in the last three years. Three years prior to that, when I was working for the former provincial member for Wellington, dealing with the board was excessively frustrating for me as an assistant to a member. I dare say it must be extremely inconvenient for someone who's relying upon the board for a cheque. I don't know how satisfied you are about the board's performance in terms of customer service over the last three years. I'm totally dissatisfied and I think you've got more work to do in that regard, or the board does.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think that's one of the reasons for the process we're now involved in with the PLMAC committee, the Premier's committee. I think there is some evidence, if I were going strictly by the briefings I get on a regular monthly basis, that there is some improvement in some of the problems we've had at the board, a long way from what we want as yet, but certainly that they're working on them a good deal.

**Mr Arnott:** So you're satisfied that it's going in the right direction at least.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I think it's going in the right direction; whether it's fast enough or not is another matter.

**Mr Thomas:** Could I add to that? I've been involved in workers' compensation matters since I went to law school in 1981. Back when I first got involved in workers' compensation then, it was fraught with its own share of problems, whether they be allegations of fraud or whether they be concerns about the lack of openness of the Workers' Compensation Board. So I guess I've seen some of the problems that have existed over the years get corrected and other problems come up. The openness problem, or the lack of openness problem, has been dealt with very well over the past decade or so. The liability issue has certainly come on the scene in the last few years.

I think the board has worked very hard the last couple of years to address the problems around customer service that became more serious in the latter part of the 1980s and I think there's some real work being done to try to address those. It's hard to imagine the Workers' Compensation Board ever being an organization that's free from a great deal of public attention. It's been in the public eye for as long as I've been involved with workers' comp.

**Mr Arnott:** The unfunded liability definitely is an issue, I suppose in the context of the fact that employers understand that there is a significant unfunded liability and see themselves as being on the hook for that. Then

when a \$180-million building is being erected by that same board, you can understand the questions that might arise in people's minds, at the very least.

But I wanted to get back. I think your suggestion was that the existing building, 2 Bloor Street, was deficient and that was creating some of the service delivery problems.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** That's been a claim for at least 18 years.

**Mr Arnott:** Because I've never heard that before.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** It's gone on long before I was a member of this House. It's certainly been a loud and vocal claim, but there was the additional problem that the lease may have been something that could have been negotiated. I don't know. It was expiring in the next—I think it's 1995 or 1994. They were facing a lease expiry as well in the not-too-distant future.

1740

**Mr Arnott:** I'd like to change gears slightly to go to the issue of pay equity. It's my understanding that on August 19 the cabinet in a meeting decided to pass a regulation under the Pay Equity Act, and the regulatory change was designed to save the government approximately \$109 million. The effect of it will prevent some women from automatically receiving the pay raises that men get through grievances over job classifications. It's my understanding the pay equity advocates argue that this regulation undermines the whole principle of pay equity—in other words, the job-to-job comparison aspect of pay equity. Could you explain why this change was made in secret, essentially, in your cabinet meeting in the summer, and do you agree that the change violates the principle of pay equity?

**Mr Thomas:** I don't think that the regulatory change that occurred in August does undermine the Pay Equity Act. I think its intention is to clarify how maintenance is to occur in one very special circumstance. I should, by way of background, say that the Pay Equity Act says very little about how the workplace parties are to maintain pay equity. Normally, this isn't a problem, as maintenance is fairly straightforward. But in unusual situations, such as very large increases resulting from classification grievances, unforeseen consequences can occur. The purpose of the regulation is to help the parties find a substitute male job class comparator that is paid at least equal to the male job class that was reclassified. So the intention is very much to make sure there's going to be no loss of pay equity. It's simply that where a classification grievance arbitration award results in a very, very substantial shift to a male job class and therefore is an aberration that there is a mechanism to limit the maintenance.

**Mr Arnott:** Where did the initiative originate for this regulation? Was it in response to concerns from the public or in response to concerns that the public service had identified or was it an idea that perhaps one of the

ministers brought the cabinet?

**Mr Thomas:** My recollection is that it was simply a fiscal concern that arose, that one would not want to end up with people getting a very, very large increase arising from what is essentially an arbitration award.

**Mr Arnott:** The budget in 1993 indicated that the government expenditure for pay equity in the broader public sector would be something around \$448 million, something under half a billion dollars. My question is, has this money been allocated as of yet, and could you provide a breakdown of the amounts allocated to the various transfer payment recipients? The first question, perhaps, if you can give me some indication as to how much has been allocated and perhaps if we could receive a written response to the second question, that would be—

**Mr Thomas:** For which fiscal year?

**Mr Arnott:** This year. The current fiscal year.

**Mr Thomas:** Could I get back to you on that with a written answer?

**Mr Arnott:** Okay. It's my understanding that on March 18 the Minister of Labour announced \$50 million to be given as down payments of up to \$2,500 to 40,000 women in the broader public sector in respect to pay equity. Given subsequent events, such as the social contract, my question is, has this \$50 million which was announced back in March of this year been allocated as of yet?

**Mr Thomas:** I can answer that if you wish me to go ahead. In mid-April, the government released down-payment cheques to over 700 eligible agencies representing down-payment funding for 1992, and to date over \$26 million has been provided to the lowest-paid workers in the broader public sector. Payments for—

**Mr Arnott:** Is the \$50-million commitment still on?

**Mr Thomas:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** The balance of it, yes.

**Mr Arnott:** You're still paying for 1992?

**Mr Thomas:** Payments for 1993 will be delivered to all targeted agencies later this fall.

**Mr Arnott:** Will that be in excess of \$50 million?

**Mr Thomas:** It won't be in excess of it. I think it'll be close to the range—

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** Yes.

**Mr Thomas:** The intent is that we will spend essentially the \$50 million.

**Mr Arnott:** How much time, Mr Chairman?

**The Chair:** About a minute.

**Mr Arnott:** Minister, some time ago I asked you about the Workplace Health and Safety Agency in the Legislature. I don't know if you recall, but I had a concern. A number of constituents had written me letters expressing concern about the tone and the content

of the letters they were receiving from the agency. I asked you at that time if you did not think it would be appropriate to allocate the existing training resources that were available to the most dangerous workplaces first, such that the resources that you had were having an immediate impact on some of our most dangerous workplaces. I'm not sure; I think your response indicated that the agency was autonomous or something.

I subsequently wrote to the agency. They haven't responded to me from last summer, and I wrote to you to bring this to your attention June 16 and I've not received a response. But don't you think it makes sense to fix the most dangerous workplaces first if we're going to have safety training, and prioritize them based on the assessment that comes through the Workers' Compensation Board?

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** One of the quick answers I can give you to that is that normally some of the places that have been considered the most unsafe are mines, steel mills, a number of other assembly operations—

**Mr Arnott:** Construction sites.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I can also tell you that in those areas, in many cases, they're further ahead in terms of the health and safety committees that they have and the standards they're now meeting. Some of the real gains that led to much of what we've done came out of the mining industry in northern Ontario.

The decisions on the training programs and the duration of them, one, two or three weeks, and everything from the size to the danger of the workplace to the kind of toxic substance they may be using enter into the classification groups that they have set. The decisions are made by the agency, and that agency is a bipartite board. It's a joint labour-management deal and it's not something, unless somebody presented me with proof that it just wasn't working, that I think I would want to interfere with.

I think the certification program that they've got under way, from the early sessions they've had where the people have graduated, have indicated a very successful operation, and from both sides, I might say.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

**Mr Arnott:** I have a lot of other questions.

**The Chair:** I'm sure you meant to add that you'd love to get an answer to that letter as soon as possible.

**Mr Arnott:** It would be appreciated.

**Mr Mahoney:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: The minister made a comment with reference to the previous administration. He said that when he arrived, he was given advice by the previous administration with regard to the building.

I'm not attempting to put words in the minister's mouth, but I want to make it clear that the previous Minister of Labour has written to Mr Di Santo to state that at no time did senior management at Workers'



Comp discuss the possibility of a new building in Toronto with him and that the auditor's report clearly pointed out that in July 1990 the Workers' Compensation Board said it made a decision to further explore and analyse alternate site options.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Mahoney. That's a point of clarification—

**Mr Mahoney:** It's just to clear, for the record, that the previous administration—

**The Chair:** —and is definitely not a point of order, but I appreciate—

**Mr Mahoney:** As long as it's on the record, I don't care what you call it.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** That was quite a play on words.

For a long time, just the last 20 years, I guess, health and safety in the workplace—of course the corporations and even the government did not really recognize the health part, and also the corporations pretty well had control with inspections and any kind of training and things of that nature. Even the government inspectors wouldn't recognize the workers' representative.

Times have changed and of course in the labour movement they've negotiated full-time health and safety representatives, which of course worked at putting training programs together and joint instruction with management. But the areas where we have the full-time health and safety representatives on the workers' part, are there any statistics showing where accidents may actually have been reduced as a result of the joint training programs, and also with the full-time representative there? Do we have any stats in comparison to where they don't have full-time representatives or people who have a say on behalf of the workers?

1750

**Mr Thomas:** I'm not sure that we have statistics on the full-time versus part-time, but we certainly have a number of pieces of evidence that would support the notion that where the workplace parties are jointly responsible for health and safety, the workplaces tend to have better accident records.

The mining industry itself is an example of an industry that for many years has been working on a joint internal responsibility system model. The chances of being injured in a mine are much less than the chances of being injured in the health care sector. The statistics on the number of injuries per 100,000 hours worked are much better for the mining industry and are much better for the petrochemical industry, which has also more recently seen the importance of joint responsibility systems, than would be the case, say, in the health care sector, which perhaps hasn't moved that far.

There's also a recent study within the last year, I think, and we can get it for you if you'd like, that looked at the effect of internal responsibility systems in

Ontario and Quebec. The statistics in that report indicate that those workplaces that have implemented joint internal responsibility systems have a much better health and safety record than those that haven't.

**Mr Cooper:** On the Ontario mine rescue program, I was at the awards ceremony up in Thunder Bay for the teams when they competed. The initial funding is from the consolidated revenue fund and then reimbursed from a special levy on the mining industry by the Workers' Compensation Board. Are any other training programs set up that way?

**Mr Thomas:** I don't think so. Pierre?

**The Chair:** I'm getting furious nods of "No," or "Don't know."

**Mr Thomas:** The answer is that I don't think so, but I'd like to get back to you with a better answer.

**Mr Cooper:** Obviously the mining industry has taken ownership of the training program, to its benefit, and I was just wondering if anybody else had taken that same ownership in any other industry.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** I'd have to go back to my experiences in opposition days, some time back—

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Those were heady days.

**Hon Mr Mackenzie:** —but the cry from the workers was always that they weren't really going to enforce health and safety unless the committee itself or the workers on the job had the authority to make decisions, including the shutdown of an operation. What really, I think, led to the changes in health and safety legislation, while the workers didn't get that right in itself, was the fact that the mines had already gone that route, set up the committees, and the committee itself could order a shutdown. The results have really been tremendous in many of the mining operations. I think that put the pressure on to change the health and safety legislation to the extent it was changed.

**The Chair:** I would like to say at this time that by mutual agreement, the time for which we've agreed to complete estimates for the Ministry of Labour has come to a conclusion, and I thank the members for that cooperation.

Before we go into a series of votes, the Chair wishes to put two items on the record. The first item has to deal with the fact that the Chair wishes at this time to remind all members that they can at any time during the process, and it's always helpful prior to the commencement of a given estimates, invite any parties who are part of the estimates to the process. The Chair noted that there were several questions directed to the minister regarding the WCB, and the minister attempted to answer them to the best of his ability. However, it should be noted that this opportunity is there for members. That's part of the process, and for whatever reason, that was not done. I thought that for the record



we should be reminded of that.

The second issue which the Chair feels very strongly about and wishes to place again to the record is the process of the minister calling upon the deputy for support with respect to answers. Although the Chair exercised a lot of latitude in recognizing the minister's desire to rely on his deputy, there were occasions when, in my view, the deputy wandered and proceeded into the discussions with matters of opinion and policy. Although I did not say anything at the time of the estimates because no member complained, I do wish to place for the record that the process is a new one and one which the committee may want to examine before future estimates. As I say, when the minister referred matters to the deputy, that is the process, and the minister did that without any difficulty, but I did wish to place for the record that concern, and that is now on the record.

At this point I'd like to proceed with the votes, because we'll be called to the House in a matter of minutes. Having completed the estimates, I'd like to now go through the votes.

**Mr Mahoney:** I have a point of—something.

**The Chair:** I can't recognize a point of something, Mr Mahoney, and you know that.

**Mr Mahoney:** A point of order then, if you want to—

**The Chair:** Then what is the point of order?

**Mr Mahoney:** In relationship to your comments, I don't know if I understood that to be an admonition of opposition members for not hauling Di Santo or Mr King up in front of the committee or what. We clearly had an opportunity at the Legislative Assembly com-

mittee to do that, did so, and the purpose of today and the other day in dealing with Labour estimates is to hear from the minister, and, I might add, from the deputy, and I appreciated the deputy's contributions to this.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Mahoney. That's not a point of order.

Shall vote 1901 be approved? All in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

Shall vote 1902 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1903 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1904 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

Shall vote 1905 be approved? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1906 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

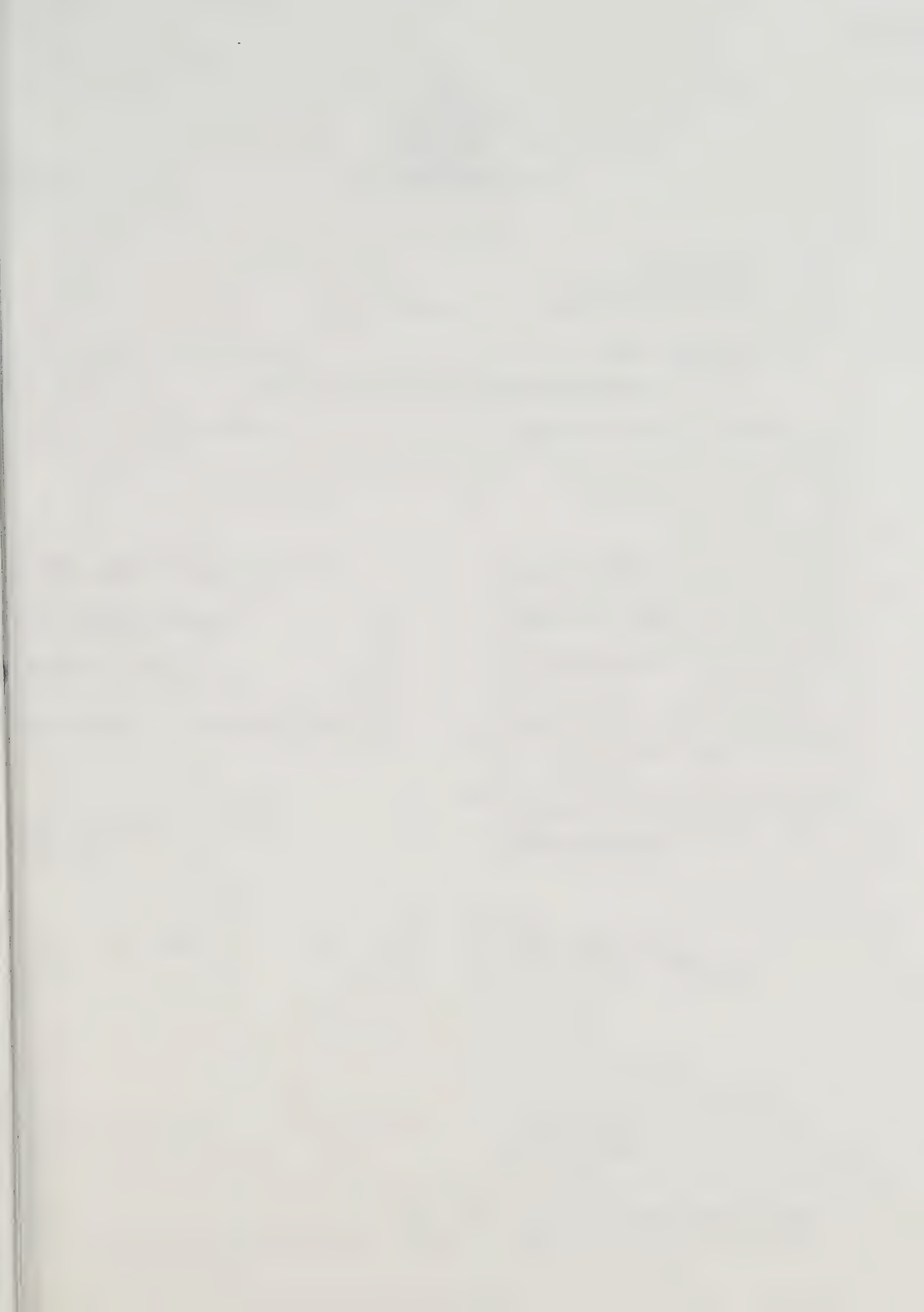
Shall vote 1907 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Labour be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Labour be reported to the House, as approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

This committee stands adjourned, to reconvene tomorrow, Wednesday, October 13, immediately following routine proceedings, at which time we'll commence the estimates of the ministry responsible for women's issues.

The committee adjourned at 1758.



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**Clerk pro tem / Greffier par intérim:** Carrozza, Franco





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ISSN 1181-6465

## **Legislative Assembly of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## **Assemblée législative de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

Wednesday 13 October 1993

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

Mercredi 13 octobre 1993

## **Standing committee on estimates**

## **Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Office responsible  
for women's issues

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 13 October 1993

The committee met at 1538 in committee room 2.

## OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We've convened today to begin the estimates for the ministry responsible for women's issues. We're pleased to welcome the minister, the Honourable Marion Boyd, and her deputy. We have seven and a half hours for consideration of this ministry. In accordance with the standing rules, the minister has her allocation of time; then we will proceed to the official opposition and third-party critics; and then have time for rebuttal before we get into question and answer.

If there are no questions, I'd like to welcome the minister. Please proceed.

**Hon Marion Boyd (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues):** Thank you. Members of the committee, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to talk to you today about the programs and activities of the Ontario women's directorate and the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

It has been several years since the minister responsible for women's issues appeared before this committee, and I would like in my remarks to refer not only to current activities but as well to other initiatives introduced during my tenure as women's issues minister.

This year, 1993, marks the 10th year that the Ontario women's directorate has worked to achieve its mandate. As a central agency, the OWD assists the government in its commitment to achieving economic, legal and social equality for all Ontario women.

Our priority issues, including poverty, economic wellbeing, workplace discrimination and harassment, and the prevention of violence against women, support the government priorities of economic renewal and social justice. In speaking to you today, I want to outline ways in which the directorate carries out its mandate and works to achieve the priority issues that I've just mentioned.

First, I'll describe the agency's responsibility for a major government initiative, the strategy to prevent violence against women; second, I'll touch on a few areas where we assume the lead role in the development or administration of other initiatives specifically designed to benefit women; and finally, I'll talk about how in our role within government as advocates for women we work collaboratively with other ministries on issues relating to women's equality. In this process, we contribute to the development of policies and programs and analyse proposed initiatives or legislation for their

potential impact on women.

Central to the work of the Ontario women's directorate is the recognition of diversity among women. The directorate works hard at ensuring that our policies and programs are inclusive and that they speak to all women in the province: women with disabilities, immigrant and refugee women, women who are members of racial minorities, older women, aboriginal women, francophone women, lesbians, all women.

One of the means by which we achieve this goal is through establishing partnerships with the community. Our partners are many and varied. We work with unions and corporations through our change-agent program, with aboriginal organizations in the development of a family healing strategy, and with ethnospecific community groups in the planning of our public education campaigns. You will see that these partnerships are reflected in the programs I will discuss throughout the course of these remarks. Our partnerships with the community are integral to the success of the directorate programs.

I would like to speak first about the government priority issue on which the women's directorate has the lead: the prevention of violence against women. I'll begin with a brief overview of the issue and then describe the directorate's prevention initiatives.

The government, as I have mentioned, has made it a priority to end violence not only against women but against children and other vulnerable people as well. The term "vulnerable people" denotes those who are particularly susceptible to abuses of authority or physical advantage. As everyone here in this room is well aware, wife assault, sexual assault and violence against women in general are the ugliest and most clear manifestations of women's inequality in this society. In a recent Angus Reid national poll, 97% of the respondents indicated that violence against women is an important issue on which governments should take action. When asked to rank issues requiring government action in order of importance, respondents placed violence against women at the top of the list, ahead of reducing the deficit.

This government has established ongoing initiatives to eliminate violence against women. The Ontario women's directorate leads and coordinates these initiatives. We chair the interministerial committee on violence against women prevention through which 15 ministries work on a comprehensive strategy to address the issue from a variety of perspectives.

The strategy comprises a three-pronged approach. The



first is to provide services to victims. This component involves, for example, the funding of rape crisis centres and shelters for assaulted women through the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Community and Social Services respectively.

The second is to ensure that crimes of violence against women are adequately and appropriately dealt with by the criminal justice system. Related programs include victim/witness assistance programs through the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The third arm of the strategy is prevention and education. Our public education campaigns, with which you are all probably familiar, are part of the strategy.

The total government commitment to preventing violence against women in the 1993-94 fiscal year is over \$95 million. This figure includes approximately \$16 million that flows to the OWD and allocations to the base budgets of other ministries for the funding of shelter support and other services. Funding of the violence prevention initiatives accounts for approximately 70% of the directorate's annual budget, and of that 70%, 86% flows out of the directorate to eight other ministries.

In 1991, the government decided to integrate the sexual assault and wife assault prevention initiatives into a comprehensive strategy aimed at preventing violence against women. This year the OWD has undertaken a policy-based program review to explore the levels of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of programs and services funded or approved under the initiatives.

As part of the program review, the directorate has consulted with those affected by the current programs and services to facilitate their input into the design of a comprehensive strategy aimed at preventing violence against women. Through a joint steering committee composed of staff from several ministries and community representatives, grants totalling \$280,000 were awarded to 44 community groups and coalitions of groups across the province to hold their own public consultations. The results of the consultations will be compiled and presented in the form of recommendations to me, as minister responsible for women's issues, very shortly. We will continue this community partnership to ensure that the new violence against women prevention strategy is as responsive as possible to the community's varied needs.

As I mentioned before, public education is an important component of our violence prevention initiatives. The Ontario women's directorate may best be known for its annual awareness campaigns aimed at preventing violence against women: the wife assault campaign in November and the sexual assault campaign in May. Public education is essential to our strategy to end violence against women. Victims of violence continue to need shelters and other support services, but unless

we make a long-term investment in prevention, in changing attitudes, the abuse will continue.

The television ads for both our wife assault and sexual assault prevention campaigns are familiar to most Ontarians, and the directorate is regarded within Canada and abroad as a leader in public education on this issue. The campaign messages have evolved as Ontarians have become more aware of violence against women.

In the current campaign, our key messages are that men, not women, are responsible for ending men's violence against women, that the term "wife assault" encompasses a broad range of abusive behaviours, and that any unwanted act of a sexual nature is sexual assault. Our shift in focus towards men's responsibility is in part to counteract the widespread tendency to blame the victim. It also enables men to feel more involved in and committed to fostering, with women, a non-violent community. These ads have proven highly effective. They've won numerous prizes, including the Television Bureau of Canada's "Bessie" award for excellence in public service advertising.

As part of our evaluation of the campaigns, market research is regularly conducted to evaluate their effectiveness, and the evaluations are yielding encouraging results. In 1990, for example, 71% of the respondents considered threats to be a form of wife assault, but in 1992, 91% felt this to be the case. Some 74% of respondents agreed that it is up to the abusive man to change his behaviour, and men, at 77%, were more likely to agree with this viewpoint than women. In the case of sexual assault, 87% of adults and 90% of teens felt the campaign would help men realize they should have clear consent to sexual activity.

The campaigns appear to be doing what they set out to do, and although we have a long way to go before violence ceases to be a major threat to women in this province, we can take some satisfaction in knowing that we are headed in the right direction.

The ads for both the wife assault and the sexual assault prevention campaigns are being run for a cycle of three years. This approach has the advantage of reinforcing the campaign messages over time, and of course is highly cost-effective.

In planning our campaigns, we have developed a unique model of community partnership. A community advisory committee composed of service providers and representatives of ethnocultural groups from around the province participates in the development of our campaigns from the beginning. The OWD staff and community-appointed co-chairs coordinate the process, and through the process we are ensuring that we are developing components of the campaigns which are culturally appropriate and which will reach a greater proportion of women and men in the province.

As an example, we have worked with 39 community groups which wrote and reviewed wife assault brochures

in 17 languages, including Somali, Cambodian and Farsi. We broadcast our wife assault radio ads in 11 languages, including Micmac, Ojicree and Greek, and we run newspaper ads in 14 languages. This year, in partnership with our community advisory group, we will be developing original radio ads in French and five other languages.

Another important component of our campaign is the local public education grants program. We award more than \$400,000 annually to community organizations across the province for public education projects geared to the needs of their own communities.

As part of each campaign, more than 100 groups mount activities to reinforce the campaign themes within their own communities. The combination of a large-scale mass media campaign and the community-specific local projects ensures that our messages about violence against women are heard by all Ontarians in a manner that is most appropriate and most meaningful to them.

**1550**

The issue of family violence within the aboriginal community came into sharp focus with a report entitled *Breaking Free*, released by the Ontario Native Women's Association in 1989. That report revealed that aboriginal family violence is widespread, intergenerational and not adequately addressed by existing provincial violence prevention initiatives.

Our government entered into a partnership with the aboriginal community in order to address the challenge of reducing family violence within the aboriginal community. This partnership model is one of both community and interministerial collaboration.

Initially, the directorate and the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat, or ONAS, entered into a partnership jointly with eight aboriginal organizations, both on and off reserves. We formed an Aboriginal Family Violence Joint Steering Committee, composed of 11 government ministries and the eight aboriginal organizations. An aboriginal representative and an OWD staff person co-chaired the committee.

The partnership resulted in the most comprehensive consultation ever undertaken with aboriginal people in Ontario. More than 6,000 aboriginal people in 250 communities participated in this community-based process.

The consultations resulted in the development of guiding principles which were approved by cabinet. In July of this year, the steering committee completed a draft report outlining a holistic strategy for family healing.

Along with the aboriginal community, four government ministries now share the lead on developing the implementation strategy for this project: the OWD, the native affairs secretariat, the Ministry of Health and the

Ministry of Community and Social Services. The aboriginal representative remains as the co-chair as we work towards implementing the family healing strategy and as we move towards aboriginal self-government.

One of the important challenges facing the OWD this year, along with all government ministries and agencies, is finding ways to continue to meet the needs of Ontarians in this time of declining financial resources.

When it comes to providing services to Ontario women, one program consistently seeking funding is the operation of women's centres. The women's centres are community-based organizations run by and for women. They link isolated, marginalized women to services within government and within their own community. These services may include career counselling, settlement support for newcomers to Ontario and the provision of resource materials in languages other than English and French.

As well, women's centres offer their clients a chance to meet other women with similar backgrounds and experiences. Among those who benefit most from services provided by these centres are women with disabilities, immigrant and racial minority women, aboriginal women and other members of communities that have traditionally been underserved.

Recent decisions affecting government, community and private funding have made it difficult for women's centres to continue to operate. Women's centres, for the most part, have subsisted on a combination of funds from various sources. Some women's centres were in danger of closing, and that's why I'm especially proud that we have managed to provide a total of \$1 million in operational funding to stabilize 20 women's centres in this province.

All ministries have contributed to this fund, because our government believes that the support of women at the community level is key to the achievement of equality and social justice. The funding of women's centres underscores our commitment to meeting the needs of Ontario women, especially those women whose needs may not be met by mainstream means of support.

The stabilization funding is being administered by the OWD and issues related to the administration of this funding will be reviewed and evaluated in two years' time.

The directorate's more established funding program, the one that is probably familiar to the community, is our community grants program. The program is founded on the principle that grass-roots women's organizations have a wealth of expertise and ideas for projects which will benefit the women in the province.

The directorate awards grants which range from \$1,000 to \$24,000 to women's organizations for projects on violence against women, poverty and economic issues, workplace discrimination, the balance of paid work and family responsibilities. We produced an



award-winning, plain language Guide to Community Grants, reflecting our commitment to make the grants program more accessible to women with disabilities and to all Ontario women.

In 1992-93, we awarded \$878,000 to 101 community organizations across the province. This past June, 32 groups received a total of \$327,606 in grants. The community grants allocation for the current year is \$749,200. The community grants program gives meaning to the word "empowerment" by allowing community groups to determine their own needs and to design the means of addressing them.

I would now like to focus on the economic aspects of women's equality. We, as a province, are trying to adjust to the unprecedented changes our economy has undergone in recent years. With hundreds of thousands of Ontario women and men having lost their jobs and with industries that once would have closed temporarily having shut down permanently, our economy is restructuring and adjusting to the new reality of a global economy. We need to address the impact of these changes on women and ensure that any economic adjustment is carried out within an equity-based framework, one which provides equal access to economic opportunities for all Ontarians.

Earlier this year, the OWD established an advisory body, the Advisory Panel of Women in Business and Industry on Economic Renewal. The panel brings together 17 businesswomen from across the province who have also been active within their own communities. The panel advises us about how women are affected by economic restructuring and how they can more actively participate in the economy and in the government's agenda for economic renewal.

The advisory panel is examining several key issues, including financial investment, community economic development, job creation and how job creation programs often fail women, self-employment, and women and pensions. Two meetings so far, held in June and September of this year, have generated some exciting ideas. I am confident that the Advisory Panel of Women in Business and Industry on Economic Renewal will provide valuable input into the government's plan for our economic future.

Changes in the area of employment hold great potential to increase social justice for women. When women are paid adequately for the work they do, when we are not dissuaded from certain occupations and directed into others, when the wage gap narrows from its current 30%, when the workplace is as hospitable to women as it is to men, only then will women have a chance at equality, because then we will have options, and in many respects equality for women is about options.

The Ontario women's directorate is continuing its efforts to increase workplace equality and employment

options for Ontario women and is taking a leadership role in these areas.

Our change-agent program helps organizations introduce programs or changes to their workplaces which will benefit women. As an example, the African Heritage Educators Network and advisers from other black community organizations are developing a program to encourage young black girls to pursue their studies. This program includes mentoring, tutoring and other supportive measures.

In another project, the Ontario Federation of Labour is producing training material and programs aimed at eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace.

Xerox Canada, together with 11 other private sector organizations, has developed a video and training guide to support policies which help employees balance their work and family responsibilities.

By disseminating resources developed through our change-agent program, the Ontario women's directorate is able to transform the motivation of organizations willing to make changes into concrete initiatives which will benefit working women in Ontario, now and in the future.

The Ontario women's directorate takes a multifaceted approach to promoting economic self-sufficiency for women in Ontario. The OWD has worked closely with the office of the Employment Equity Commission to ensure that Bill 79, the proposed employment equity legislation, and the regulations governing it are workable, fair and effective. This legislation will undoubtedly enhance women's economic equality.

Other measures are necessary, however, to ensure that women of all races and abilities enter, remain and progress in the workforce and that they receive equitable remuneration. To that end, we have worked with the Ministry of Labour to expand the Pay Equity Act to include about 420,000 women not previously covered, and the government has passed additional amendments which strengthen the act's provisions.

The sharp decline in government revenues has required that we delay slightly the implementation of pay equity, but our commitment to it remains firm. In March of this year, we made a \$50-million pay equity down payment to some of the lowest paid workers in the broader public sector. A significant number of the women who have benefited from this down payment are immigrant and racial minority women, traditionally the lowest paid in our society.

In addition to amending the Pay Equity Act, we have also worked with the Ministry of Labour to amend the Employment Standards Act so that all working parents are entitled to 18 weeks of unpaid leave to care for newborns or newly adopted children. In short, we've increased protection for working women and indeed for all workers and have raised the level of equity in terms of the compensation for that work.



1600

Just as the women's directorate is concerned about women in the labour force, we are aware that women's employment options are shaped long before their first job interview. The directorate advocates for gender equity for girls and women in education and training. This includes promoting their integration into maths, sciences and technological studies and occupations and the removal of barriers to allow full access to post-secondary and skills training.

This summer the OWD acted as joint host, with the University of Waterloo, of an international conference entitled Gender and Science and Technology, also known as GASAT. GASAT brings together international delegates who share a common goal: removing the barriers to girls' and young women's pursuit of math and science.

Not only did the conference, which is the seventh international conference by this group, incidentally, provide an invaluable opportunity for the directorate to exchange ideas with other world leaders in this crucial area, but it generated a wealth of printed resources from which we and our international counterparts may draw in the future.

Because the Ontario women's directorate acts as an adviser and an advocate within government, much of our work is invisible in the sense that it doesn't result in programs that we can call our own. When we've done our job well, new initiatives or legislation introduced by other ministries are equitable for women.

The harmonization of work and family issues is one example. The directorate has consulted with government ministries to ensure that work and family issues are considered during policy development. We have also worked in partnership with the Management Board secretariat to help implement work and family policies in the Ontario public service.

In 1994, as a contribution to the International Year of the Family, the OWD will hold a national symposium on harmonizing paid work and family responsibilities.

Child care reform is another government priority issue in which the OWD has had significant involvement. The government regards child care as an essential public service which is critical to economic independence and is working towards stabilizing the child care system and improving access to services by the women who need them.

The OWD was instrumental in establishing a child care component within the government's Jobs Ontario Training program: 20,000 subsidized child care spaces were made available to program participants.

The Ontario women's directorate continues its advisory role on all other government initiatives having an impact or potential impact on women, including long-term care reform and social assistance reform.

Along with our efforts to advance the social and economic equality of women, the Ontario women's directorate continues to work for equity for women within the justice system. The OWD works collaboratively with the Ministry of the Attorney General to meet this goal. The relationship between these two organizations was strengthened earlier this year when I assumed the Attorney General's portfolio while continuing to serve as minister responsible for women's issues.

Within the last year, the OWD sat on the advisory committee overseeing the drafting of Bill 99. This bill, the Limitations Act, proposes comprehensive reform of the law governing limitations, the specified periods of time beyond which charges for various crimes cannot be laid.

The modifications to the Limitations Act, including the removal of the limitation period in some instances, will help female and male survivors of incest and abuse seek justice in their cases.

The OWD is participating in a federal-provincial-territorial working group to develop guidelines for court-ordered support awards. These guidelines are expected to make support awards more consistent, more substantial and more efficiently delivered. Because women continue to be the primary care givers in this country, the adequacy of support payments is crucial to women's economic equality and to reducing the number of children who live in poverty.

I would like to briefly mention the Ontario women's directorate experiences with both the expenditure control plan and the multi-year expenditure reduction plan. Our plan has been to minimize the impact of budget constraints on services for women. I expect that much of our discussion will focus on this area in our later discussions before this committee.

We have identified efficiencies in streamlining for costs and have explored opportunities with other equity offices for shared services and joint projects to reduce costs. Our approach has lessened the impact on the violence initiatives and on programs such as community grants.

Our office is on target in managing the budget reductions for 1993-94.

I would now like to outline the recent activities of the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues. The advisory council, or OACWI as it is called, is a schedule 1 agency with a mandate to advise the provincial government on issues of concern to women. It has direct access to the government through the office of the minister responsible for women's issues, and the council provides a vital link between the government and the women of Ontario.

In 1991, our government sought to address a variety of concerns about the advisory council which Ontario women had communicated to us. These were concerns

about the council's relationship to the community in terms of accountability and the diversity of its membership. We undertook an extensive series of consultations with the women of Ontario, asking them how to improve communication between ourselves and the provincial government. The recommendations arising out of those consultations helped to formulate a new mandate for the council.

The council's new mandate is to undertake community outreach and consultation. This includes holding regional meetings to gather the views of women on issues of regional concern and to provide information about government policies and programs affecting women. Council membership, under the new mandate, consists of 15 members and is composed as follows: three members from the northwest, three from the northeast and two from each of the southwest, central, east and Metro Toronto regions of Ontario, plus a chairperson.

The current council is the first to have been selected through nominations by the public. For the first time in its history OACWI has a francophone president, Jacqueline Pelletier. Ms Pelletier oversees a council whose membership represents aboriginal women, women of colour, women with disabilities, francophone women and white women.

The Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The appointment of the current 15 members marks the beginning of an era in which the council represents, better than ever, the interests of the diversity of women in this province.

This completes my summary of the activities of the Ontario women's directorate and the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I look forward to questions from the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister, and thank you as well for providing the committee with a copy of your comments. That was very helpful. Ms Poole, I'd like to move to you, if I may.

**Ms Dianne Poole (Eglinton):** I'm very pleased to participate in these committee hearings on estimates for the women's directorate and, as critic for the official opposition on women's issues, I have a broad number of questions that I'm hoping we'll have opportunities to cover.

The minister explained at the beginning the mandate of the Ontario women's directorate and she basically narrowed it down to three different areas: first, the major government initiative on strategies to prevent violence against women; second, areas where the directorate has the lead role in the development of other initiatives working with other ministries; and third, as an advocacy agency for women.

Some of my remarks will focus on the violence against women strategies and initiatives, but others will be of a broader nature because one of my disappoint-

ments is that I believe the Ontario women's directorate should take a much stronger role as far as advocacy, provision of information and as a resource for the women of this province is concerned. A number of areas and directions taken by this government have been of particular disappointment to me as a feminist and as a woman who cares very much about issues of concern to women, because I don't see that the voice of the directorate was present when those issues were prominent.

The NDP government has said consistently that it cares about women and the issues that affect them, and that these issues are important in that they can be counted on to address them. Yet we're now over three years into the mandate of this particular government and I think the actions have shown that it has fallen far short of its commitments and its rhetoric.

I would like to go over a number of areas where we particularly would like to have seen more proactive measures on the part of the government or where we have been disappointed in the past. The first I'd like to bring to the committee's attention is the slasher films which are films that are very violent, which celebrate the brutalization and deaths of young women. They are now in Ontario and have been for a number of years, but it seems now they are proliferating and they can even be purchased or rented in the corner stores.

#### 1610

It was almost exactly six months ago, in April, when I tabled a resolution concerning slasher films and actions that I would like the government to take. In fact that resolution was passed unanimously by the House. I was quite encouraged by that and by the support I received from members on all sides of the House, but I have been very disappointed. I had thought, from comments made on the government side that day, that action was imminent, yet it's now six months later and there have been no announcements made, there have been no specific plans tabled.

Just recently an interest group—I hesitate to call it that, because it's much more than an interest group; it has been one of the motivators in trying to get action on this—the Coalition for the Safety of our Daughters, gave me a letter from the minister to the group wherein she said what the ministry was doing, what action it planned to take in the immediate future. I thought it was very strange, since I have had correspondence and meetings with the minister on this, that she failed to let us know.

But when it comes to the Ontario women's directorate, I guess my disappointment is that this is an issue on which I thought they could have taken a very proactive stand. As an advocacy ministry, I would have expected them to be fairly visible in working with Consumer and Commercial Relations to stem the tide of these films. It may not be, in some people's eyes, an important issue,



but I think as far as women and violence initiatives are concerned, this is one of the most horrible things I have seen, which I think all of the people in this committee would certainly not be very tolerant of. I've personally been very disappointed that there has been no action in that regard.

Another issue which came to my attention over the last couple of years is that of the Employment Standards Act to ensure the protection of home workers. I think many members of the committee will be familiar with this issue. I'm sure Ms Witmer would be, as the Ministry of Labour critic, because the home workers have been working very hard for a number of years to try to seek some provisions which would assist them to remedy their particular situation.

To date, I've seen a very thin consultation paper. I have been quite surprised at how slowly the government has acted on this particular issue. To me, it's one of equity and it's one that I think they would have support from all three caucuses on. Certainly I can pledge you the support of our caucus in remedying their plight. I would like to see the government move very quickly on it and I would like to see the minister responsible for women's issues take a very proactive and public stand in this regard.

Another area which is not under the direct control of the Ontario women's directorate but where I would have hoped they had been more proactive—if they had been proactive, certainly it was invisible; I think the minister used that in her comments—is with the family support plan. It's very crucial to women who for many years have faced obstacles as single parents, whose spouses have not obeyed custody and support orders and who are in dire straits because of it. There have been attempts by various governments over the last number of years in Ontario to try to remedy that.

SCOE, the support and custody orders enforcement plan, was the first one brought in by the Liberal government, but it was quite obvious after several years that the demands on that program were not being met and that there needed to be reform and adjustments to the program. It was a new program, one of the most proactive and progressive in Ontario, and I was very proud of that particular program. I had a very small and, I'm sure, very insignificant part in encouraging the former Liberal government to bring the program in.

There were certain things I would have liked to see. I supported fully the NDP government's decision that it would reform the program and bring in a different way of looking at ensuring that support obligations were enforced, but there were certainly things that our caucus was critical of.

We were critical of the fact that \$850,000 was slashed from the budget at the very same time that \$1 million was being spent on advertising to convince fathers with child support obligations to pay into a

program that is now mandatory. It was our feeling in the Liberal caucus that the 25%—a rough estimate—of fathers who were meeting their support obligations should not automatically be a part of that program, that they should be taken out of it so that there would be more resources to deal with the problems. In other words, for the parts that weren't broken, why do you spend that type of money trying to fix it, because certainly the other 75% are major problems.

We aren't convinced that adequate resources are in the program. I know the minister—I think actually as Attorney General you made the announcement in June, somewhere in that vicinity. I'd really like to get some viewpoints from her, as Attorney General and as minister responsible for women's issues, as to the success of their announcement and whether they are making progress in that regard.

One of the announcements by the NDP government this year which I was extremely surprised to hear the Ontario women's directorate silent on, and also the minister responsible for women's issues, was its decision to slash fees for all new general and family practitioners, paediatricians and psychiatrists practising in areas the government claimed were overserved. This affected new practitioners.

In the original plan, the proposal was that they would have their salaries cut by 75% over the next five years; in other words, they would get only 25% of what established doctors in the area were getting. We were very quick to point out that in practical terms this meant that most new physicians in these areas simply would not be able to practise because this wouldn't even cover their overhead.

But what surprised me that the government did not look into this matter more thoroughly at the beginning was the fact that the proposal had a disproportionate impact on women, because if you look at the numbers, the majority of paediatricians and psychiatrists are women. Even in family practices it's true. It was obvious that it would be women who would be impacted more than any other group by this particular policy. Not only that, women who as a client wanted to have a female practitioner would certainly be limited in future by this particular proposal.

The government did back down on it. They did adjust their proposal. But what was really dismaying to me is that the government appeared to have done it without an impact study, without recognizing the impact on women. To me, this is the type of thing where I would have expected the Ontario women's directorate to leap into the breach as an advocacy ministry, because that is one of its primary roles, to be an advocate with other ministries. Why weren't they there battering on the door of the Minister of Health to say, "Look at the impact on women—not only women practitioners but women who want to use the services of women doctors"?



I would really like the minister to talk to us about that and either explain why she as minister was not advocating in that particular direction, or if she was, why her voice wasn't heard, because to me, it just dragged on for a long time until we got that resolved.

One of the areas the directorate has been responsible for that I have really applauded for many years, both under the previous Liberal government and continuing under the NDP government, has been the efforts with respect to awareness campaigns on sexual assault prevention and wife abuse. I think these programs have been very effective and I certainly think they are helping to change attitudes.

That's why I was really surprised to hear last May when the minister gave her speech when she was announcing the campaign this year that many of the myths still persevere and the messages about the crime of sexual assault are not getting through. The minister had made that comment in her statement. The research quoted by the minister at that time provided evidence to suggest that perhaps we should review the campaign and its funding to ensure that scarce dollars are being used in the most effective manner to make sure that we are shattering those myths.

**1620**

Now it's just very recently, I think in August, that I heard via treasury board that they are actually going to have a program review and we certainly welcome that. Although on the face of it, it's been my experience that the ads are very effective and hard hitting, I think it's wise that we do take a look and make sure that we are going about this the right way so that we do break those myths.

I guess changing attitudes is one of the ways in which I was somewhat disappointed by the minister responsible for women's issues, because I know that she is a very strong feminist and that she has spoken out very strongly on issues of importance to women over the years.

There were a number of very disturbing incidents that happened over the last year where I was disappointed by the minister's silence, I guess is how I'd characterize it: the Grandview-Piper affair, the Bell Cairn affair, the Carlton Masters affair. For a government that has prided itself in encouraging women to break the silence, I think the silence was fairly deafening from the minister responsible for women's issues in these three areas.

I'd like to talk to the minister about corrective actions which have been taken not only in the matter of harassment but also dealing with the correctional institutions and how sexual assault training is going on and about some of the attitudes that were quite disturbing in the whole business about Piper and victimizing the victims.

Our caucus and our leader, Lyn McLeod, have repeatedly requested that this government release the Grandview report to the victims so that questions over

the government's conduct in the affair, which have occurred over several decades and several governments, can finally be answered. We have critical answers that remain unanswered both in this and in the Carlton Masters case, for instance.

While they are different issues on the one hand, or the other I think it sends a disturbing message out to the women of this province if they do not feel that the members of the government are going to speak out very firmly, when these matters happen, and condemn them.

Another area where the Ontario women's directorate would not have direct control but where I would think it would or should be proactive in advocating is the area of child care.

The minister certainly knows, since she was minister responsible for women's issues together with being Minister of Community and Social Services for several years, that our caucus was disappointed in the solely focused approach on non-profit child care as opposed to focusing on quality child care, whether it be provided by the non-profit or the private sector. I think our first priority should be quality, not the type of service provided, and perhaps we can spend some time talking about the shift in child care from quality to ideology.

Mr Chair, how much time is left?

**The Chair:** You have about 12 minutes.

**Ms Poole:** There was an audit conducted last January of the community initiatives unit of the Ministry of the Solicitor General which is responsible for three programs: victim services, sexual assault services and wife assault services.

The audit provided several examples of waste and inefficiency within the unit. For example, it found that one employee had rented a car for a six-month period that included 26 weekends and five statutory holidays, and it was never fully explained why the car was needed for such a long period and over weekends and holidays.

Then there were other instances. An employee had an expensive ministry-owned cellular phone installed in her own car because she travels a lot. The only problem was, while this employee travels a great deal, unfortunately she doesn't use her own car very often to do it. There were instances like that that called into question whether some of the small items were being taken care of.

But there was another thing in the audit that I thought I should bring to your attention; The goals and objectives had not been defined in writing for the sexual assault services program and in fact the project plans for the program didn't exist. I think it's essential that when you have scarce dollars they be used in the most effective manner, and we do hope that the results stemming from the audits are being taken seriously.

We have still not been able to obtain a copy of the

ministry's response to the audit, so we look forward to hearing what action has been taken to address this recommendation.

An audit was conducted a year ago on the issue of transfer payment accountability and the draft audit report found that while provincial funding to sexual assault centres had increased dramatically over the last few years, accountability had not been built into the system along with the increased funding.

Again, with provincial funding stretched thin, it is imperative that sexual assault centres be made fully accountable for the manner in which provincial funding is spent. Only then will we be able to judge whether the funding is being used in the most effective way to deal with women's needs.

There were certainly instances reported in the newspaper, instances in Barrie, Oshawa, Scugog. I myself was made aware of one in Timmins, which my colleague for Cochrane South would be aware of, where the accountability did not seem to be there and there were questionable expenditures. I think it's really imperative for the credibility of the program that we ensure that's taken care of.

I think the public, as the minister has indicated, is extremely supportive of initiatives to prevent violence against women, but it only takes a number of these instances being brought out before a public which is increasingly aware of mispending of tax dollars gets upset about it and perhaps changes its attitudes about being willing to spend the money. I think it's important that we make sure the money is spent properly so that women are getting the services they need.

One of the things that came up a number of times when I did a women's outreach across the province last fall and in the spring was that there are a number of shelters for abused women and their children that still do not receive core funding and have to reapply every year for funding.

It makes it very difficult for these centres to do long-term planning, staffing and programming decisions, and many of them were living basically hand-to-mouth and on donations from the community, which—we certainly would encourage all transfer partners in this province to be using these resources, but I think it comes back to the fact that if these centres don't have adequate stable funding for their base operations and their basic operations, then they're not going to be able to meet the need for services and they're going to be spending a lot of their resources trying to survive as opposed to doing the services.

I'd like to ask the minister questions about that and whether there are plans to review this situation and ensure that the funding is stabilized for these existing shelters.

The other instance the minister actually brought up in her comments was the funding of the women's shelters,

and we were very pleased to see \$1 million—I think it was \$1 million—committed to the women's shelters—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Women's centres.

**Ms Poole:** —women's centres, which is entirely different than women's shelters—to the Ontario women's centres to help them survive, but they still are very concerned that they don't have core funding. This is what they really want. They have proposed to the minister a model that is similar to, I think, British Columbia. I look forward to talking to the minister about that particular one.

One program that I couldn't really believe the province killed was the eight-year-old employment equity internship program, designed to boost the hiring of visible minorities, women and the disabled. This was a program that I think was a very positive initiative for women. The program was killed just weeks after it had been advertised widely and it drew in many applicants who were then very disappointed because they were told they had to look elsewhere for opportunities. That's something that perhaps we could discuss, whether there is any possibility of reviving that particular program.

**1630**

Recently the press reported the study by federal, provincial and territorial authorities called Gender Equality in the Canadian Justice System, and it's a very interesting report. Basically its conclusion was that sexism and gender inequalities are endemic in our legal system. They say at best our legal system ignores women's experience and at worst victimizes them by applying stereotypes.

When I looked at the expenditure control plan of the Ontario women's directorate, I saw that in several areas they have reduced funding for programs that would act to in fact reduce this particular charge of sexism and gender inequality in the judiciary and in the legal system.

One of them was to reduce funding for the training of crown attorneys on issues relating to sexual assault and wife assault and reduce funding for the administration of the victim/witness assistance program. I am hoping that the minister's response will be that it reduced inefficient administration or something, because I can't believe that at this time, when we're starting to grapple with this particular problem, this would be one of the targets for cost reduction.

The second one in that regard was to reduce funding for training on sexual assault and wife assault prevention for police and correctional workers. This again, in my women's issues outreach across the province, I heard in many communities. I heard it by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses when they did their lobby. It's an ongoing problem.

On paper it sounds fine. There's police training and police sensitivity but it isn't there in actuality in a



number of the communities. So to reduce funding for police and correctional workers in that particular area, I just don't comprehend that this is going to be a positive move.

The initiatives in that regard, including reducing funding for counselling programs for male batterers and an administrative program, was 10% of the Solicitor General's budget in that regard. It just seems to me that those particular cuts fly in the face of what we're trying to achieve.

One of the things I want to talk about directly—I've alluded to it—is the advocacy of the Ontario women's directorate. To the public eye, the directorate has been invisible and has been silent on the women's issues which face this government. I can tell you that I have not found a very cooperative attitude with the Ontario women's directorate when I have called for information or resource material. When I call for information about programs that are going on, quite often I'm referred to other ministries, saying they don't know.

The other problem I've had is that for I guess almost a year and a half, since I first became women's issues critic, I've been trying to get a list of the women's groups across the province. Last September I was promised that it would be coming any day, that they were updating it, and despite repeated requests we cannot get that information.

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Waterloo North):** Me too.

**Ms Poole:** I hear the critic for the Conservatives say that she has had the same problem.

That concerns me on a personal basis, but it also concerns me as far as public education is concerned. It would seem to me that one of the major roles of the women's directorate should be to disseminate information and be a resource. Yet when I phoned and asked if I could have some resource material, I was told they were too busy to get it themselves but they did have it in their library. My assistant said, "Well, can I come down and look at it in your library?" and they said: "No, I'm sorry. We don't allow you to have access to the library."

So I'm saying, what's the use of having this resource if in fact we aren't having that opportunity? I would like to expand it not only for the opposition critics to have access to it, but I would hope that this is something they could provide for the public. I can tell you there aren't a lot of resources out there that are really accessible for women to find out information about women's programs and women's issues and some of the things we care very much about.

Over the coming days we'll be talking about accountability for funding. We'll be talking about the role of the women's directorate, sensitivity training, the impact obviously of the social contract and the expenditure control plan on women's programs. We'll be talking about their initiatives on violence and many

other issues. I'm really looking forward to the next three days and what we can accomplish in a very positive environment.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Ms Poole:** Do I have 30 seconds left?

**The Chair:** No, but I should indicate that in the process of estimates we would deem your statement about the lists as a request and therefore it is now coming through the Chair as a request for members of the committee. The minister will have an opportunity to respond, and she may wish to. But that would come to the Chair now as a request and we would hope that it would be furnished during the course of these hearings.

**Ms Poole:** I would certainly welcome that, and thank you, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** I just wanted to let you know I was treating it as a request.

**Ms Poole:** Yes.

**The Chair:** If I could now move to Ms Witmer, you have up to 30 minutes for your comments.

**Mrs Witmer:** I would just concur. I attempted to get a list of addresses and phone numbers in order that I could contact some of the people whom we relate to and I was told that information would not be made available to me. It's very frustrating to try to help women when you can't even get a list of the women throughout the province who are going to be impacted by some of the work that you're trying to do.

My staff just simply couldn't believe the response they got when they asked for that particular piece of information, so I hope that will be made available to us. We can't do our job if we can't access people and determine what their problems are, whether it be women in shelters or the transition houses or wherever. It's simply not there; it's not being given to us.

I'm pleased that we're going to have this opportunity to talk about the programs and the activities. I personally think that Ms Poole has done an excellent job of summarizing the concerns. I certainly would have to agree with her that I would concur with the concerns she has raised. One of my biggest disappointments has been that in the past three years I do see this particular group, the Ontario women's directorate, being totally invisible. I do not see them as being representative or advocating on behalf of women in this province and I think that's extremely unfortunate.

Some of my remarks today are going to focus on the area of health. That's an area where we need advocacy on behalf of women, and it has been totally lacking. I feel that when we've asked questions in the House, we've been always encouraged to approach the minister responsible for a particular issue. I guess if that's the case, then why have a minister responsible for women's issues if we're not getting answers? Why have an Ontario women's directorate if it's not advocating on



behalf of all women in this province?

Sometimes I see a focus on a very narrow issue and a special-interest group issue but I really don't see it reflecting women in this province. In fact I would suggest most women in the province aren't even aware of the fact that this is available to them, so I really question, I guess, the value of the directorate at the present time or whether or not it's even necessary.

I want to just briefly touch the major government initiative that you talked about, and that was your strategy to prevent violence against women. You talked about the need to have a community partnership "to ensure that the new violence against women prevention strategy is as responsive as possible to the community's varied needs." That's on page 4. That's kind of interesting, because I received a media release from the YWCA of Kitchener-Waterloo on September 30, 1993. As you know, the YWCA serves women and children and it has since 1905.

1640

This is the heading: "Mary's Place Loses All Provincial Family Violence Funding." It goes on, and I'm going to read the whole thing because I think it's important. What has happened here does not reflect what I've just heard.

"Mary's Place, the YWCA's emergency shelter, did not receive one cent out of \$126,000 new annual dollars which are being allocated to Kitchener-Waterloo for services to victims of family violence. Yet, for the vast majority of over 400 women who seek refuge at Mary's Place annually, long-term abuse by those they love is the leading cause of their homelessness.

"At any given time, 70% to 85% of the women in our 61-bed shelter are living with nightmares of childhood sexual abuse, frequent and severe beatings, or abandonment by their families," said Chris Willette, director of Mary's Place. Since January of this year, 53 residents fled to the shelter out of abusive relationships. 'We can offer safety, a decent room, good meals and some social support; however, whether a woman is in an acute crisis or suffers the debilitating effects of manifold abuse over many years, she needs much more than these basics,' said Doris M'Timkulu, executive director of the K-W YWCA.

"Thanks to a demonstration grant during the past 17 months"—and that was part of the provincial wife assault initiatives in 1991—"the YWCA was able to employ an experienced counsellor who assisted these women, individually and in a group of other survivors, to take a step at a time away from further harm on to a road towards healing. This has abruptly come to an end." They were told in August there would be no further money available to them in September.

"Mary's Place is an alternative to Anselma House when that shelter is full, or for women who have problems fitting into the environment there. 'When we

are full, as we were in July with an occupancy rate of 105%, one of the agencies we refer women to is Mary's Place. They are a vital part of the network of services available to women in this community,' commented Sue Coulter, executive director of Anselma House.

"The cost at Mary's Place is a fraction of any alternative. 'Does it make any sense that government is ready to pay for a battered woman to stay at a motel where she has no support and little, if any, safety, but refuses to pay for her stay at Mary's Place?'"

"The decision by the Ministry of Community and Social Services is simply incomprehensible," said Dana Tunks. 'We have repeatedly shown the ministry how essential a service we are providing. With budget and service cuts in many service sectors, Mary's Place has become the only place of safety in a net full of holes. We are saving the government a huge amount of dollars by keeping very vulnerable women—and children—out of high-cost hospitals, addiction services or even correctional institutions. Yet, the only government grant we are receiving for Mary's Place covers one counsellor position.'"

These people are looking for support from this government to help women in need, and the funding has been totally removed. So I really question the truth of the statement that was made where you're looking at community partnerships to ensure that the new violence against women initiative prevention strategy is responsive.

There was a solution, there was a partnership in K-W, and now that funding has been totally eliminated. We now have women and children who are being sent to a motel, as opposed to a safe facility here. Now it's left up to the community, I guess, to subsidize that particular program, if they continue to operate.

I'm not sure whether or not the Ontario women's directorate, the advisory council and this whole area are responding to the needs of women in the province at the present time. I'm not sure if it's really kept up to what's of concern.

I want to focus now on the health care system. I'll tell you, I become extremely concerned about our health care system, because women are being and have been treated differently than men, and I don't see anybody advocating for women at the present time.

Women are taking a look at cardiology, they're taking a look at cancer treatment and many of them, I can tell you—and these are ordinary women, they're not special-interest groups. These are women from all walks of life, from all backgrounds, disabled or visible minorities, it doesn't matter. They're saying, "Why are our needs not being met?" We know, because it was pointed out in the American Medical Association report, that gender is a factor in patient access to kidney dialysis, transplantation and the diagnosis of lung cancer and coronary catheterization.

Women have been treated, and I think we need to acknowledge this, at times as guinea pigs in the fields of gynaecology and psychiatry. We've had thalidomide, we've had DES, we've had the Dalkon shield, we've had the faulty breast implants, we've had the controversial hormone replacement therapies and women have been subjected to an endless array of mood-altering pills and drugs.

Unfortunately, most of the medical research in the past has been conducted largely by males on men and to the benefit of men. A leading example is the 1988 study of 22,000 male physicians that found men can lower their risk of heart attack by taking aspirin every other day. Researchers couldn't even tell us at that time if the same would hold true for women because there were no women tested. According to a recent report in the *Economist*, even breast cancer treatments are sometimes tested on male mice because females are smaller and costlier, with hormonal cycles that make them harder to understand.

Scientists have offered us two reasons for excluding women from their studies. The one reason they give us is that the menstrual cycle might affect the results and that they could become pregnant during a drug trial and this raises the risk of litigation should something go wrong. Physical differences between the sexes, including menstruation, body fat levels and the ability to absorb the metabolized drugs, means that tests on men do not necessarily determine how much of a drug a woman should take or whether she should take it at all. So I guess we have a problem here.

Fortunately, at the present time, and it was raised by Mrs Poole, we know that many of the women in medical schools are doing an outstanding job and actually women are now roughly half. I think we're going to see some changes and I think that's very positive, because certainly there is a need for medicine to start treating men and women much more fairly than they have in the past.

I think we need to recognize that women suffer from many health hazards and certainly poverty is one, and there are many women who suffer because of poverty. We have the single mother but we also have the senior citizen who suffers from poverty, a health hazard. Racism, low self-esteem, sexual harassment, and even full-time homemaking can be a health hazard. Certainly we know that research indicates to us that the monotony, isolation and job dissatisfaction can even put a full-time housewife at far more of a health risk than women who are paid for their work. This is what we need to start acknowledging.

Unfortunately, as well, women often belong to minority groups, which do not receive the medical care that they need. Sometimes these women are overworked, they're exhausted and they're poor and many of them come from highly authoritarian cultures, and so

that's a unique problem in itself. Even after these women have lived in this country for many, many years, they are still not comfortable asking their doctors questions and these, I guess, are some of the problems that we face in this province, and that we face throughout the entire country of Canada and probably the United States as well.

#### 1650

I guess the first question I would have to the minister, and I don't know if you want to write it down and respond to us at another time, is that I would really appreciate a complete list of initiatives or actions that have been taken by this government that are designed to meet the health needs of women.

I'd like to move now into some specific health areas that I know there is growing concern about. I'll start with in vitro fertilization. We know that this is an area that has been identified as one which might be delisted by the province. I can tell you, I've received many letters from constituents who are very concerned about this action. I guess one of the concerns they have is that this does enable them to have a child, and obviously that's extremely important, but they really question why we would delist in vitro fertilization and yet we would continue to subsidize abortions—one, two, three or four. They just can't understand how the system works, why you'd delist one and yet you'd continue to pay for abortions as many times as abortions were required. I put that out there because I think you need to deal with that. They believe that infertility deserves treatment just like any other medical condition. We know that one in 12 couples of child-bearing age is infertile, and I think that's extremely important to remember.

I guess the concern we have within the PC party is that if you take away the funding for infertility treatment, it's going to create a two-tiered medical system. People who want it will still be able to access it if they have the dollars to pay for it. The other thing we're going to be doing is discriminating against the female who is infertile. I think you have to have gone through the experience yourself or know someone closely who has to know how extremely devastating that experience is.

It's also going to increase the likelihood that other treatment protocols will be continued when no longer appropriate and thereby may actually increase the cost of OHIP. Apparently, at the present time, in vitro fertilization costs \$4,500 per cycle, plus \$2,500 in drugs. OHIP pays \$1,500 per cycle. We need to recognize that many insurance companies are in the process of deinsuring the drugs and we need to recognize that IVF is a proven medical treatment which has been considered non-experimental since 1985 and also that IVF is the only appropriate medical treatment for some instances of infertility, such as missing, diseased or blocked fallopian tubes. For these people



who have those problems, IVF is their very, very last chance to have a child born to them, and we know that nowadays, if you want a child, and there are many couples who do want a child, adoption is simply not an option any longer.

Personally, I think it's a question this government needs to take a look at. I guess I go back to what I said before: You have chosen to fund abortions and yet the funding for the opposite end of reproduction is possibly going to be withheld in the future. I don't personally believe it's fair and equitable, and my questions to you, Minister, are: What assurances are you prepared to give to the families that this service will not be delisted in Ontario? How can you justify funding one side of reproduction and not the other? How much money is actually being spent on IVF each year by the province at the present time?

The next area I'll go to is breast cancer. We know that the waiting list for breast cancer radiation treatment in this city, Toronto, is again overflowing, and unfortunately these women, who are extremely vulnerable, emotionally very dependent on their family and their friends, are being forced either to go north for therapy, alone, without their families and the support of their friends, or to wait for the services in their home towns. I have to tell you, I find it totally, totally unacceptable that this would be happening.

In September at least 13 women were placed on waiting lists for radiation therapy in the Metro area. We know that five of the women did go to Sudbury, North Bay or Kingston for radiation therapy rather than risk a 12-week wait for services, eight of the women have decided to wait 12 weeks—three months, five of the women are ineligible to travel for social reasons, because they have dependent children or family members, one woman could not travel for medical reasons and two others have refused the five- to six-week stay away from home to receive the almost daily doses of radiation therapy.

The optimum time frame for radiation treatment following referral and surgery to remove either a cancerous lump or a breast is six weeks. I am aware that in February an additional radiation oncologist was hired in Toronto to help reduce a 14-week wait for services. However, I think we also need to get it on the record that, between June 1992 and February 1993, 114 women were sent to North Bay or Sudbury for treatment. I don't think there is an issue I presently feel more outraged about than this particular issue where we are forcing these very, very vulnerable women—I mean, if anyone has had cancer, particularly breast cancer, you must realize how totally devastating this is. Yet we're saying to women: "We can't treat you in Toronto. You will either have to wait 12 weeks"—which is far beyond what is recommended—"or travel north." It's totally unacceptable.

I wrote to you in February of this year, Minister, regarding this issue. I asked for immediate action by the provincial government to address the lack of breast cancer prevention and treatment programs and facilities in this province and the inadequacy of our health care system's response to breast cancer, and yet the situation has not improved. This is an area where the Ontario women's directorate could be taking a strong advocacy role. This is an issue that relates to every woman in this province. We are all vulnerable.

I would certainly have these questions for you regarding the elimination of the waiting list: What action was taken earlier this year to meet the demands for breast cancer radiation treatment? What action has been taken recently, since we learned about the problem again in September? What action or plans are being made to avoid waiting lists for radiation treatment in the future? What assurances is the minister prepared to give to ensure that services will be made available here in Toronto? Could the minister also table a list of locations in the province that provide services for women with breast cancer and the amount of money that was allocated to those sites this fiscal year? Could the minister table a list of sites in the province that have facilities to detect breast cancer and the amount of money allocated this fiscal year?

I'd like now to take a look at the area of cardiovascular care. Although this has long been recognized as an area where men are considered to be the prime candidates for heart problems, we now know that in March of this year the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada reported that cardiovascular disease kills nearly as many women as men. I personally don't believe that women in Canada or this province are aware of the fact that they are just as susceptible as men are.

#### 1700

In fact, the stats were as follows: 36,266 women versus 38,823 men. That was in the year 1990. The difference is quite insignificant. Yet we really aren't dealing with it as it relates to women. In fact, the issue of gender bias in both cardiac care and research dominated this year's annual meeting of the American College of Cardiology. We know there is a bias, and certainly the bias needs to be addressed.

My question to you is, have any measures been undertaken by the government to combat cardiovascular disease in women? If so, I'd appreciate the details.

I'd like to turn now to the detoxification services for women. I have in the past expressed my concern about the availability of detoxification services for women. It appears again that there seems to be preferential treatment for males, and yet there are many women who suffer from the same problem.

I indicated in April 1991 that one out of every four women who sought treatment at Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital's detoxification unit was turned away because



of a bed shortage, and of the 21 beds at the detox centre there were only three for female patients. You can see the unfairness of the situation as far as treatment of females is concerned.

If you take a look at the other facilities within the province in the area of the health care system, if you take a look at the addiction services, you will see that most of them have been primarily designed and developed by men for men. I think it's important to recognize that entrance into a detox unit is often the first step in rehabilitation from alcohol abuse. If we don't make this available to women, they don't have the opportunity to stop the abuse.

I'd just like to mention here that when I talked about the fact that addiction services have been designed and developed by men for men primarily and not for women, another area where we do a very, very poor job, and I guess one that I feel very strongly about because I don't see any changes taking place, is children, young people. I'll tell you that we in this province probably are in a worse situation today, in 1993, than we were in 1990. We have more young people than ever before. In fact, I have many parents, particularly mothers, come to my office telling me about their teenagers and their 14-year-olds, their 12-year-olds who suffer from severe addiction problems, who have become violent, who have behavioural problems. I'll tell you, in this province there's no treatment. I've helped many of them access treatment in the United States. Of course, we know OHIP no longer provides for that type of care. This is an area I think women should be advocating for, and that is treatment for their children as well. It's simply not happening. It's an area where we're totally lacking.

My question to you, Minister, is, I'd like the locations and the number of detoxification beds that are available for men in the province at the present time as well as the number of beds that are available for women, as well as, are there any available specifically for teenagers?

Just tell me when I'm done. Three minutes?

I'll deal with teenagers and sexual diseases as the last part. A report that was released last year by the province's chief medical officer of health found that it's the young teenage female who suffers the highest rate of sexually transmitted diseases of any age group, whether male or female. It appears it's the young women between the ages of 15 and 19 who are infected with gonorrhoea and syphilis etc, far more than the males in the same age group. We know that if some of these diseases are left untreated, they can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease. We know that's a cause of female infertility, so there really is cause for genuine concern.

My final question to you would be, what measures have been undertaken by the government to combat the high rates of sexually transmitted diseases in teenaged

females? I'd like the details of the measures that have been made available.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms Witmer. In accordance with the standing orders, the minister has still left to her up to about 30 minutes to handle any of the responses as she sees fit. So, Minister, that time is now yours. Then we'll proceed with ordering up our business to complete the balance of the estimates.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I think the issues that have been raised about the role of the directorate within government and what it means to be an advocacy ministry within government are very important, because it's the problem the directorate has always been faced with under all governments.

When a minister is a member of a cabinet and a directorate is a part of the civil service, the role is different than it is if you are an out-of-government advocacy agency. That's why the advisory council on women's issues tends to be the place where that outside advocacy actually lodges. And you're quite right, there has been quite a silence on that side, because since 1991 we have been reorganizing the advisory council. The appointments were really only made and the council has only begun to undertake its new mandate over the last six months.

I'm quite convinced that we're going to find the new council, given its representative nature and the fact that the nominees have been nominated by their communities, to be a very effective vehicle for the out-of-government, independent kind of advocacy that I think we all would like to see. I certainly would. It's a different kind of advocacy than any civil-service-based, cabinet-minister-based advocacy can be.

I should tell you, quite frankly, that this is probably the biggest conflict that the members of the staff in the directorate have. Most of them are very strong advocates who come from their community and would like to be very outspoken when they find things going in a way that they would not choose by our sister ministries, which after all have the line responsibility.

Our job is to work within government, to use as much moral suasion as we can to bring forward the facts, the critique of the kinds of policies that are coming forward, as the policies are being developed. We are part of the cabinet committee process and monitor all of the cabinet policy and program initiatives that come forward with an eye to trying to convince ministers and ministries to take account of the effect on women of any policy changes, to see their policies within that equity framework that we were talking about.

We very often argue very, very hard against some of the policies that are subsequently adopted by the line ministries, but obviously we do that within the process of government. That is not always appropriately a public kind of process. I'm sure that both of you have col-

leagues who have been ministers responsible for women's issues in the past, and they will tell you that this really is one of the dilemmas that you have if you are an advocacy ministry within government.

The other dilemma that we have, of course, is that the decisions do get taken, in terms of budget means, in terms of the day-to-day policy issues, by the line ministries themselves. We will do our utmost to get our sister ministries to give us the answers to many of the questions you've asked; in fact, we'll be very interested in hearing the answers as well. But it is not the kind of detail or the kind of information that we normally would have in our directorate, because that line responsibility is such that many of the questions you have asked would more appropriately be asked during an estimates hearing on the particular ministries.

I think that's a really important issue for us to raise: How is that integration of women's interests done in a policy and a budgetary way within government? I think it's quite appropriate for us to be exploring it here, and in fact some of the issues you are raising are issues that are raised by the staff of the directorate and by myself on many occasions. I think it's wise for us to get those on the record as concerns that I think we share in many cases.

1710

We also have a philosophical issue. Ms Witmer suggested that perhaps we don't need a directorate, and I think most of us in our guts are sort of saying, "No, no, no, don't even suggest that," but it is something we need to be looking at over the next number of years.

First of all, was the way in which the directorate was conceived of and instituted 10 years ago the most effective way of making sure that women's issues become part of every decision that's made within ministries? There are those who say yes, certainly at that time it was, but it does revolve as a bit of a satellite around the edge, and I don't think any of us should deny that that's the case.

My own vision would be that over time every ministry would have its own area which is particularly dedicated to the issues that women have, and we're beginning to see that. We've got the women's health bureau. Many of the questions you're asking, Ms Witmer, are the kinds of questions that the women's health bureau is most concerned about and has done a lot of work on, and it frankly needs the support of all of us in government in order to make sure that the work it does is appreciated and understood.

There are other areas where, when we suggest that it would be appropriate to have specific units looking at equity issues, there is resistance, and others where there is a growing acceptance that that needs to be, if we're really going to get gender equity in terms of our policies, a part of the program of government. I think that is beginning to happen.

So those are appropriate questions for us to be talking about. I don't think we should ever be afraid of looking at whether our organizational way of doing things is having the outcome we all want it to have. I think certainly when we went through our consultations two years ago on the advisory council on women's issues, the kinds of issues that you are raising are the kinds of issues that women were raising across the province:

What is the role of the advisory council as opposed to the directorate? Where is the information flow really supposed to be? How do they advocate directly and get information directly, and how do we work that through? Our answer, frankly, is that we believe empowering the advisory council to be more grass-roots in its approach, to provide the advisory council with the kind of information it needs to be the kind of advocate it ought to be on behalf of women, is probably the most important role we can play.

But I am concerned about both of your concerns about finding the doors closed to you in terms of information. That's something that does concern me and it is something we did hear during those consultations, that this sort of difficult role the directorate plays—what is confidential, what is not, what is government property, what is not, how we actually do that kind of role—is something that we're exploring as we do our whole look at where we are now and where we need to go in the future. So I think that's very appropriate.

I'll try to go through and answer some of the issues, and forgive me if I keep coming back and saying my role is to bring these things to the attention of line ministries and to work with line ministries and to press line ministries and to try and add my voice to that of line ministers who are trying to deal with specific problems.

The slasher film is a really good example, because the Minister of Consumer—I always get this wrong; the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations is equally concerned. She and I have both met on a number of occasions with folks in both of our ministries, the Attorney General's ministry and CCR, and have worked with the women's directorate on how exactly we can go about dealing more effectively with this.

As you know, part of the issue is the federal-provincial jurisdictional issue about what is obscenity, what is not acceptable. How do we limit the rights of freedom of people to (a) conduct a business, (b) disseminate information, and so on?

Those are issues that we're working on together. We have jointly written to the federal government asking it to join us and in fact to try and get an across-the-country movement on this, and certainly at the federal-provincial-territorial meetings of women's issues ministers this is an issue that we have tried to raise and that we clearly are trying to deal with within our own



areas at all the provincial levels. So that is the kind of thing we can do.

I cannot take away from the minister her responsibility for the Ontario film board. I can't speak over her or take over her policy, nor can she deal with the legal consequences, in terms of the Attorney General, in terms of this whole issue. We need to work together and to be advocating as strongly as we can within our jurisdictions. While that may not have had the outcome we all would have liked to have had as quickly as we would have liked to have had it, we believe it can be the most effective way in which we can deal with these things. You will know that the minister has taken a very clear stance with the Ontario Film Review Board around her own views on this, but the review board is an arm's-length agency and has decision-making powers of its own. That whole structure and how that operates is something that we are committed to looking at the effectiveness of in terms of the protective nature.

On the labour front, on the employment standards thing, we have been very active in the directorate with our partners in the Ministry of Labour on this issue. As you know, the Minister of Labour has had a lot of legislation that he has been bringing forward and has certainly advocated strongly. We both have jointly funded some of the projects to look at home workers and what their problems are, and we both are advocating very strongly with our colleagues in government that this is an area of legislation that must be looked at. This is a growing area of employment for women. It seems to be sold as something that's very positive, but we all know that the home worker sector is a very vulnerable and often very difficult to organize sector, and that's part of what makes protection difficult.

I wonder if we could talk about family support more in the context of some of the questions as we go on, because it is a complex area. I think we have made great strides since March 1992 in terms of improving the collection rates for those people who are on the direct deduction from payroll, but we continue to have problems with those people who are not on deduction rates. I think we need to talk about the whole issue of mandatory versus voluntary deductions from payroll, because it is my belief, both as women's issues minister and as Attorney General, that mandatory deduction is the only way in which we can collect these things. People often sound, in front of a judge, as though they're voluntarily going to pay their support, but the support dries up suddenly and without prediction, as many lawyers will tell us. That's a real issue for us.

The cost-cutting plans by Health: Again this is an area, as you're quite clear, that those initial plans did not go through, and part of the reason they did not go through was that many of us within government were particularly concerned about the effect of those plans on women's and children's health, particularly in remote

areas of the province. We are advocating and we are working within the system to try to ensure that where there is a direct and a very difficult effect of a plan on women and children, we're advocating very strongly on those very vulnerable members of the society.

Again, I'm sure we'll talk more about the violence prevention campaign and its success or lack of success. It does take a long time to change attitudes, and one of the things I often say is that we need to look at this in the same light as the other major campaigns that we've seen in our society to change our attitudes and our behaviours: drinking and driving and Participation. It takes a long time for those messages to come through, and sometimes repetition in fact needs to be over a period of time until that comes in.

**1720**

I'm sure you are well aware that no member of the government, no minister of the government, can make any comment on cases that are currently before the courts. All of the examples you used in terms of expecting people to speak out and to advocate are cases that are under investigation or before the courts. It is not possible when you are within government to do that kind of role without in fact jeopardizing the investigations and court actions. It is really a delicate balance as to how you advocate.

We as a government have insisted on the investigation of these complaints, unlike any other government. We have insisted that those investigations be carried through and that charges be laid where that is appropriate, where police officers make that decision and those charges go through. We are vigorously prosecuting where charges have been laid and we are very, very concerned to ensure that process does not get lost. We believe that's the best way in which we can advocate on behalf of victims of violence, by ensuring that they have their day in court and by ensuring that the kinds of processes we're putting into place to try and deliver the kind of compensation, the kind of counselling, the kind of support that people who have been victimized need are there. Certainly, in the case of Grandview our very clear commitment is to continue to work with the survivors' group and its counsel to try and ensure that we are moving along in that direction in a way that's going to be appropriate.

On child care, all I can say is that we've been very active in terms of child care policy development, active as part of the consultation process that went on, working with all of our contact communities in terms of advocating on behalf of their involvement with child care. It is not an ideological position alone, you know, this position we have on child care; it is a position that really arises out of our need to be accountable and to ensure that the community has a say in child care, that the public dollars spent on child care are clearly accountable through public means and that the decision-



making that's made in terms of the programming, in terms of the delivery of those services, is at a community base and is accountable to the community, particularly the parents involved.

We believe, in this service as in other services, that the way to do that is through community-based boards made up of consumers and providers alike. That is the way to do it. To that extent, it's ideological, but it is not without a very, very clear commitment to quality and to a belief that quality is best ensured when there is an accountable process.

When we talk about the whole issue of the Solicitor General's audit of community services, again it's hard for me to comment on what is really the responsibility of another minister. I will say quite clearly, and I think the minister himself has said, that the community service area of Sol Gen is a relatively new area. Most of the funding that the Solicitor General has done in the past has been under the police services kind of service delivery, very different from community services. They did not, when they began providing community services in the way they are now, have an infrastructure that gave the kind of support to those community services and the kind of supervision to those community services that we see, for example, in the health sector or in the community and social services sector.

Certainly, I as a member of the community always was very deeply concerned about that lack of program support in that ministry for such an important program. We are finding in the discussions we are having around the province on the integration of sexual assault and wife assault services that this need for program support is very clearly felt at the community level, that some of the decision-making around the placement of particular sexual assault centres and the way in which those centres were set up was not initially accountable enough. I don't think anyone is trying to say it was. We are collecting in our consultation very strong views from the community, some of which are quite diverse and certainly not a consensus at this point, as to how to resolve some of those problems.

Those are exactly the kinds of problems we are trying to resolve, how we can ensure that this accountability is there and that every dollar we have is being spent, as much as possible, on direct services to those who need them. At this point in time, we don't have the luxury of not ensuring that this is the case. We simply know that public scrutiny is much too high.

Similarly, with the wife assault shelters the whole issue of funding has been a very thorny issue. It's shared, in most cases, between municipalities and community fund-raising, as well as provincial dollars and always has been since the shelters first began to operate in the early 1970s. The challenge for us is, how do we deal with that at a time when all of the budgets, the community-based budgets, the municipal budgets

and the provincial budget, are under great pressure?

We attempted last year, in the disentanglement process, to take on the funding of hostels as part of our 100% funding under the GWA proportion. That was not accepted in the end by AMO. It was not an agreement that was signed. We still face the same issue: Should shelters be funded under the welfare act? If not, how should they be funded and how can we achieve stable funding across the board?

The particular question Ms Witmer asked about the Kitchener-Waterloo area is an important one, because it's an example of where the funding, through a particular ministry in a particular way, has resulted in something that the community sees as a loss. In that particular case, it was a demonstration grant that was always understood to be a temporary grant. The ministry in that area has a strong community component, in terms of its decision-making, as to what further grants go on.

We can certainly provide for you the information we have received from the MCSS on that particular issue and what the rationale is there. That's not to say that people are going to necessarily accept that rationale, but it is to say that there is one and that the intention certainly is to provide the best possible range of services given the budget restraints we have.

On the women's centres, I should correct the impression that this is not core funding. It is core funding, \$50,000 to each of the 20 centres. It's only 20 centres, however. There are others in the province that were not part of the original applicant group that are not yet funded.

**Ms Poole:** But it's only for two years, is it not?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It's to be reviewed whether OWD is going to continue to administer it. We have not been a line ministry in this way before. We have taken this on because it's an all-ministry kind of initiative, but we may find, particularly as we go through our consultation on the best way to integrate the services, that in fact we don't have the program support out there for the women's centres. That is what we are hearing from them. They are concerned that we don't have a program supervisor in each area who can help them to look at their budgeting, to build the accountability, to do the board training, to really help with the government community relations. That is an issue that needs to be resolved. It's the delivery, though, who actually is responsible, rather than the funding.

It's our firm hope, because we're quite convinced that these organizations are very good value for the dollar in terms of the services they offer to their communities, that we will be able to convince our sister ministries to contribute even more so we can expand to some of the centres that haven't been caught at this particular time.

In terms of the employment equity internship, it has not been cancelled; it has been suspended for a year. One of the reasons for that is the very severe impact of

the budgetary constraint and the social contract on government itself and the very strong belief of many employees that it's not appropriate to be doing that kind of specific internship at a time when we have so many fluctuations in staff and need to really pause and take a look at that.

1730

It's my real hope that this will come back and perhaps even be stronger than ever, because we're concerned about the effect of the downsizing on our own employment equity targets. It is certainly our position in the directorate that this is an important program. It has provided the seeds for employment equity in the past. We're very strong advocates of the program and we'll continue to be. It of course is managed by Management Board and, again, we can use our influence; that's it.

In terms of gender equality in the justice system, you can imagine that my double portfolio makes me particularly interested in this area. Perhaps we can talk in more detail about that. I can simply tell you that I would think a very high proportion of the time that we spend on interministerial activities goes on between OWD and the AG's ministry on this issue.

We have done critiques of the papers that have been provided. The directorate is involved right now in dealing with crown directives on wife assault and sexual assault and stalking and that sort of thing in terms of how to make those strong enough and clear enough that we allay some of the community fears.

We have of course in front of the Legislature, which is intended to improve the discipline for our own provincially appointed judges and the appointments process, the Courts of Justice Act, to try and encourage employment equity within the judiciary. Also, there is the requirement that the chief judge provide training and that this become part of the job description, if you like, of the chief judge, which we think is very important. Those are all issues we're most anxious to continue to deal with.

When we talk—and I think we need to talk in fairly great detail; I'm hoping we can—about our expenditure control plan, we have worked very, very hard with our sister ministries in terms of how these reductions have been done and how to fill the gaps. The Solicitor General, for example, in training, put its own dollars into making sure that the training did not get lowered in terms of its amount or its force. We didn't have the dollars. They then supplemented the dollars by taking dollars from another part of their ministry. The actual dollars spent on it are the same but the ones flowing through OWD are less.

In the case of the crown attorneys, we put the training together. As part of our integration of sexual assault and wife assault, we wanted the training of crown attorneys to be together. They need to understand how these two

crimes interact with each other. Of course, we don't have the turnover in crown attorneys that we had at one time and we are finding that an increasing proportion every year of the crown attorneys who are working in the province have had the training and have developed a very strong interest in this whole area.

With respect to Ms Witmer's particular questions, most of them really centre around the health system, and I'd be happy to discuss some of the particular issues that are there in terms of our positions. The whole problem of women's services and whether they're funded to the same extent as men's services is one the directorate deals with all the time. We don't believe they are in Recreation; we don't believe they are in Health; we don't believe they are in Education. We basically have the same concern in virtually every ministry, and part of our job is constantly, as we go through the budget processes, to say, "Why is this a disparity and how can we begin to redress it?" We've had some successes and some not such successes.

I share your concern about the detox and addiction services. These are ones that I'm particularly concerned about. I know, having been on the board of an assessment centre, that the services just aren't there, there's no place to refer to. I hope we can talk about that more as we go on.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. At this point, generally, the Chair asks the committee how it wishes to order up the balance of its five and a half hours. We have only one vote for the estimates for this office, so the matter of stacking the vote isn't really up for discussion. However, do you wish to go in rotation—I'm in your hands—or do you wish to—

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** Rotation.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Rotation.

**The Chair:** Rotation? Fine. Since there are 25 minutes left, why don't we do about 12½ minutes each for the two opposition members and then we'll begin, when we next meet, with the NDP? In six or seven minutes, it is hard for anybody to get into an issue; that's how I'd like to proceed. I can give Ms Poole all 25 minutes, which is probably the most helpful way of going about it.

**Mrs Witmer:** You can break it into three.

**The Chair:** Do you want to try that?

**Ms Poole:** Sure.

**The Chair:** You've got seven and one-half minutes. Go for it, Ms Poole.

**Ms Poole:** I suspect I'll have to continue this questioning next Tuesday, but let's start on the Ontario women's directorate, its mandate, its operations and its structure. It's now 10 years old. Minister, do you have any plans to review its operations and structure?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** At the present time, we're concen-



trating our review on the violence program itself. We're doing a very in-depth, program-based review of that major part of our mandate. As I said, it's over 70% of the funding that the directorate gets and therefore it's obviously the first place to start. It's an urgent place to start because we certainly are concerned that in these days of constraint, we may not be developing that.

Once we have completed that aspect of the work, we expect to have a great deal more information come out of our work that we do with our communities and with our sister ministries around what the best way is to proceed on that particular part of the mandate.

It may well be that will inform what we do on the home mandate, because if the demand from the community, which it is in some parts of the community, is that we become a line ministry and become the deliverer of all women's programs, we would want to go one way. If the information we get back from the community is quite the other way, that it's very happy, thank you very much, with the ministries that are now delivering those programs and that all they want to see is more administrative streamlining, then obviously that is not a strong mandate for the ministry to go in a different direction. We don't know what the outcome will be at this particular point in time.

**Ms Poole:** But that consultation is taking place or will be taking place?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It is taking place now. It's quite an extensive consultation. We can provide for you a list of the groups that got the grants and where the consultations have taken place and where they will be taking place.

1740

**Ms Poole:** That would be quite helpful. I would suggest that it would be appropriate, once you have your information from this review, to take a look at the advocacy portion of the directorate. I found your comments quite interesting, basically that the Ontario women's directorate could give advice or could give a direction to the line ministry, but there's nothing to encourage or mandate that the line ministry has to listen. It would seem to me that it's not a terribly effective voice if you have no mechanism to ensure that you're being listened to.

I was trying to think, as you were talking about it, how you might get around this to try to give some clout to the directorate. I remember way back, long ago, in a galaxy far away, when I was in government and for a couple of years I sat on the regulations committee of cabinet, there were a number of backbenchers on that particular committee. When they brought a pile of regulations to us, one of the first questions that we asked and that the various representatives from the ministries were required to answer was, "What is the impact on the community, what is the impact on the users?" and questions of that nature.

I am wondering if, when you're considering a restructuring after you've completed the consultation, one of the things you might look at is doing a similar thing for areas within the women's directorate mandate so that when a ministry institutes a program, one of the things it would have to look at and justify is the impact on women and whether in fact it had actually thought about it in formulating the policy and whether it had satisfied the Ontario women's directorate that it has done an adequate impact study.

I would submit just one other thing, the example of the new doctors and the fact that the policy was eventually changed. In the meantime, the Ministry of Health had gone forward with the policy that was quite detrimental to women, both from the practitioners' point of view and also from the users' point of view and yet it appears that question hadn't been asked.

Do you see any way you could put this kind of structure in place so that the question has to be asked and answered prior to a policy going ahead?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Let's be very clear in the case of the doctors, for example. That was a negotiating position that was taken with the OMA negotiations and the social contract discussions that were going on. It was not a policy that was firm, and when the ministry, of course, then discovered in its talks with the doctors that they didn't see that as a solution and they had an alternative solution, which the Evans committee came up with, then obviously at that point when they came to an agreement, that's when the policy decision-making came up.

We certainly talked about the impact we were having. I think every member here got letters in their constituency office and visited with people—I suspect we all did—and I think there was a lot of real concern among all members about the effect of this policy.

One of the things we have done to correct this is to make sure that our women's issues' minister is present at table. The women's issues' minister has been at the treasury board table, at the Management Board table, at the policy and priorities board table, at all the policy committee tables. We get the material, we go through it, we present our concerns and are present at the committee to advocate on those concerns when they are great.

**Ms Poole:** And that's a recent change?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** No. Certainly, since I've been minister, that has been the way in which we have operated. In the budget, for example, the insistence upon the effect on women being looked at as we do these budget reductions has been a very strong insistence that we have had because we know how vulnerable this particular group is.

**Mrs Witmer:** I appreciate your responses to the questions and I have to tell you that certainly in all the dealings I've had, I've always found you most cooperative and most willing to provide the responses, and I



really do appreciate that. I will be most anxious to get that response to the Y. I know they're anxious to determine their fate and make other arrangements, so if you could get that information to me as quickly as possible, it certainly would be appreciated.

I'm glad to hear you say you are looking at the role of the directorate. I think that's really important because I think the directorate has played a very important role and I think that needs to go on the record. Certainly, when I was chair of the school board, I was very aware of the role they were playing. Much of what they've done in the past is changed, because they've been able to achieve their goals.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** That's right.

**Mrs Witmer:** For example, we now have pay equity, we now have employment equity, so many of the goals that they were hoping to achieve have been achieved and we need to take a look at, is there still a need for a directorate? If so, what should the new role be? Sometimes we determine, and I think you hit it right on the nose, really women's issues need to be considered by all ministries in all discussions.

I guess that's the value of having more female legislators. It's so that the issues that are important to women, and women represent almost 50% of the population if not more, be discussed equally, be given equal time, equal attention. I think as more women access public life and become active, the need for the directorate will disappear because those issues will be given the attention they deserve. I'd be interested in seeing where you go with that issue.

I just have one more health care issue and I will clean that up, because next day I want to focus on some other areas, but I did have some questions.

The last issue of health was abortion. I'd like to know how many abortions we've performed in the province each of the past 10 years, how many women have had more than one abortion in the past 10 years, where we provide abortions—I'd like a list—and how much money has been spent in each of the past 10 years.

Also, we have the Task Group of Abortion Service Providers' report on abortion services. There were recommendations that were made. I'd like to know the date of the implementation of the recommendations and the cost of the implementation of the recommendations that have occurred to date. Also, if there are further plans under way to implement some of those recommendations, I'd like the expected implementation date and also the cost. I can tell you, and you know that too, that there is a significant and large community that is particularly interested in that information, so I'd really appreciate that response.

My final question here is, what is the present cost to OHIP for an abortion?

That concludes the questions I had regarding the health care section. As I say, in the future I'd like to deal with some other issues. One of them is going to be education and training, employment equity, and violence against women; that's an area we still need to take a look at as well.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** You have five minutes.

**Mrs Witmer:** Do I? Okay. I'll just deal with one more issue. It's kind of an interesting one. It's the case of those two female police officers in Orangeville. I personally found that surprising, I guess, to have that happen at this particular time in the life of this province.

Just to get it on the record, it is of course the two police constables who were sent home on unpaid leave because they were pregnant. The police chief in Orangeville maintains that they were laid off because there were no alternative assignments available to them and that to create assignments was going to impose some hardships on the Orangeville Police Service. The local police services board has upheld that particular action, and unfortunately it's had a very negative impact on the two police constables who were involved.

As I say, I can't believe that at this time in our province this is even happening. One of them has already been forced to lower her mortgage payments and dip into her savings in order to get through the next couple of months because of this. The women have filed grievances, as we know, with the police association.

Apparently the Orangeville police union's collective agreement states that pregnant officers can be laid off without pay if there is no alternative work available for them. That contract appears to contravene the Human Rights Code, because subsection 10(2) states the following,

"The right to equal treatment without discrimination because of sex includes the right to equal treatment without discrimination because a woman is or may become pregnant."

The provincial Employment Standards Act states,

"An employer shall not intimidate, discipline, suspend, lay off, dismiss or impose a penalty on an employee because the employee is or will become eligible to take, intends to take or takes pregnancy leave or parental leave."

I guess my questions are two: What action does the government intend to take to make it clear that this type of discriminatory behaviour is totally unacceptable? Also, I'd like to know the status of the grievance at the present time.

That concludes my remarks.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** On the first question you asked, we will do everything within our power to get you the data you've asked for. I don't know that the Health ministry

collects the data in quite the way you asked for it, but we will certainly do what we can. I know they do the numbers of abortions, where they're offered and that sort of thing, and I think we can find that for you, but I'm not sure that some of the cost breakdown you've asked for is something they collect. We would have to inquire of them how difficult it would be to come up with reliable figures on that.

In terms of the task force recommendations, at this particular point in time, we can certainly look at the ones that have been instituted and see if we can estimate at least the cost of full implementation of those. Many of them have not been considered as yet as policy items, and many of them have not been costed by the government.

They were the recommendations of the task force and in some cases look quite enormously expensive, and in other cases may not meet the public policy needs that our governments feels are important, but we'll try and sort through that and see what we can come up with, and perhaps do it so that you can ask additional questions if that doesn't satisfy. I think that would be helpful.

1750

In terms of the particular case you mentioned, obviously I can't talk about the particular case. I understand a grievance has been filed, as you say, in terms of the Police Services Act, and that's important, but I also understand a grievance has been filed in front of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

One of the realities for us as women is that very often our own unions, that are supposed to represent us, have in fact negotiated discriminatory contracts. One of the issues for us always is to try to ensure that there are mechanisms in law that enable people to object if they feel they are not being represented sufficiently by their bargaining agent. That's part of our responsibility, obviously, through either a specific act like the Police Services Act or any of the labour legislation, to ensure that rights are being upheld.

At the present time I'm not prepared to comment on the particular case, except that it is a disturbing example of how the kind of employment equity plan that was put in place under the new police act and the new regulations does not seem to be working well for individuals. Obviously, it's our responsibility to see how the attitudes that underlie those actions around accommodation can be done, because otherwise it affects our whole employment equity strategy. If it's easy to get around employment equity by saying you can't accommodate someone, then we have a problem that's much bigger than a particular example.

**The Vice-Chair:** I now turn to the government caucus. Mrs Haslam has a question.

**Mrs Karen Haslam (Perth):** On page 5, I zeroed in on this: In the case of sexual assault "90% of teens felt

the campaign would help men realize they should have clear consent to sexual activity." Do you have any facts or figures on the percentage of teens involved in sexual assaults or violence against women? I remember hearing somewhere, in terms of the incidence of violence from boyfriends and the age of those involved, that the violence was increasing and the age was decreasing. Do you have any of that information available?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We could certainly provide for the committee some of the studies that have been done. They've been done for a number of different groups: For example, the recent federal panel did some work around statistical work, many of our community groups within their communities have done some work, there's the Rix Rogers study that was done for the government and so on. We will try to gather together a compendium of those statistics we do have available.

It's extremely difficult, with sexual assault in particular because of the high incidence of non-reporting, to really get an idea. It's very disturbing. I'll give you an example. One of our federal colleagues was speaking at the opening of the new institute for research on women abuse in London, the Centre for Research on Violence against Women. He said he had sent out a householder with a response form asking about this kind of abuse and got back an overwhelming response in which 48% of the women who responded said they had been sexually assaulted. He was shocked at that.

I'm afraid those of us in the directorate are not shocked at that. We're deeply hurt by the fact that this is a reality in our society, but we suspect that those figures are not outlandish at all. When you really start talking to large groups of women, when they understand what sexual assault is in all its manifestations and overcome some of the barriers of silence that have been placed on us, we find that an overwhelming number of women from all socioeconomic areas and from all racial and cultural and linguistic groups report very serious incidents of sexual assault.

**Mrs Haslam:** My main concern was that it seems to be more prevalent at an earlier age in a date situation. My concern is the young women in high school who almost accept it because it is more prevalent than we know.

That leads me to my second point about the education of people. You've talked about the television ads, the campaigns about wife assault and sexual assault. I've seen them, and some of them are very good, but I wonder whether some of them could be directed or redirected to look at younger women and the fact that it doesn't have to be tolerated in a date situation to have a boyfriend. My concern is the 15-year-old and the 16-year-old who have this situation and don't understand the situation but need education about that situation.

My other question was, how have the ads been received and how much have they cost? I'm not going



to get all these questions in. How much has it cost the directorate? Is that value for money? Is it working out there? That would give me hope that perhaps we could look at a younger age and direct them more at the teens and the high schools. If it's working, then it's value for money. Should we look at that?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Yes. We can provide for you the statistics from the Ministry of Education and Training. They have focused on the date situation. Our ads for teenagers, which ran on the radio stations that had high listening rates for them, were specifically geared to helping people understand that date rape was a really endemic problem, and it was a problem for young men as well as young women to understand what consent was. We focused on that group, so we can provide you with the data on that and the response to those ads and also the details of the program the Ministry of Education and Training did.

**Mrs Haslam:** I don't want to just deal with date rape. I'm talking about hitting.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Oh, yes, the violence.

**Mrs Haslam:** I think young women think: "Well, it's not a date rape, therefore it's not sexual assault. It's not a harassing situation to be in." I'm talking about violence at that age that eventually will lead to rape or eventually may be date rape, but I'm more concerned about the acceptance of violent actions from boyfriends at a younger age.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** First of all, the acceptance of power and control by young women is entirely counter to what we expect, given the emphasis on equality, and we are seeing a disturbing effort at that. I would say you've put your finger on exactly why we're looking at the integration of these programs. It's very hard to separate all forms of power and control from sexual power and control, particularly when we're dealing with young people: how they learn their attitudes, how they learn to relate, how they learn what to expect in a relationship with one another and how they learn to behave. That is a problem.

I also think we are seeing young people observing power and control behaviour between adults in a more overt way than they may have, and seeing that glorified

in terms of our popular media in a way we may not have experienced as young people. Most of us as young people grew up in households where you didn't hit girls. Equality has its rough edge sometimes, and that may be part of what we're doing right now, trying to find out how to adjust around the power and control issues without having those rules we grew up with. How do we learn to relate voluntarily in a non-violent way?

**Mrs Haslam:** I don't know if I've got any time left.

**The Vice-Chair:** A minute and a half.

**Mrs Haslam:** Let me go into a supplementary along those lines. I think some people look at the amount of money going into facilities versus the amount of money spent on the ads—I know it's been raised across from me—and I'm sure there are people who say, what's the point of advertising services for women who have been victims of violence if that money is not there and there's no place for them to go and they can't provide those front-line services? As my time is up, I just wanted to pass that comment on. That's why I wanted to know how much was spent and what the effectiveness of those ads is.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** That's the ongoing conundrum. Do you advertise and get people's consciousness raised when you can't necessarily provide the service? We believe you do, because changing attitudes is at the root of what you do in terms of prevention. We'll never have the services unless attitudes are changed and the public demands it be a priority for government spending.

**Ms Poole:** Mr Chair, could I request one piece of statistical information when the minister comes back on Tuesday? I did want to pursue a line of questioning. Could she tell us on Tuesday what proportion of crown attorneys have had training in terms of the sexual assault and wife assault issues? I'd like to get a sense of where we are on that issue.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you. This concludes this afternoon's session studying the spending estimates of the Ontario women's directorate. We have approximately five hours and eight minutes remaining. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 19, at 3:30 pm. This meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1801.











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Haslam, Karen (Perth ND) for Mr Hayes

Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L) for Mr Elston

Witmer, Elizabeth (Waterloo North/-Nord PC) for Mr Carr

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 19 October 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 19 octobre 1993

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 19 October 1993

The committee met at 1539 in committee room 2.

## OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to reconvene the standing committee on estimates. We have five hours and eight minutes remaining to examine the Office Responsible for Women's Issues. We welcome again the minister. When we last adjourned, there was a series of requests from questioners and I'd like to provide the minister with an opportunity to respond to those before we commence.

**Hon Marion Boyd (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues):** The official questions that were asked have been passed to the clerk, and those included the list of consultation grants, the statistics on sexually assaulted teens, the update on the Kitchener-Waterloo YWCA, the proportion of crown attorneys who have received training on violence against women issues, the list of the women's groups from across the province—it's extensive, as you can tell, so we're providing one to each of the opposition caucuses, as they requested—the costs and results of the TV and radio ads for wife assault and sexual assault, and the information from the Ministry of Health on various women's health issues. They will be handed to the members. They're being duplicated now and I understand you'll have them very shortly.

I would caution on the mailing lists that the constant update problem is one that's there for any mailing list. I just caution that these are as up-to-date as we have at the moment.

**The Chair:** I believe the governing party completed the last round of questioning, so if I can recognize Ms Poole for a 20-minute segment, is that fine?

**Ms Dianne Poole (Eglinton):** That'll be fine.

**The Chair:** Please proceed.

**Ms Poole:** There are a number of issues I'd like to cover in this particular segment. Perhaps we'll start off with one that has a profound impact on women, and that is breast cancer.

The statistics are now showing for the first time that it is actually one in nine women who are impacted by this disease. It has been evident for a number of years that breast cancer is the leading cancer killer among women, so it is very much a women's issue in the true sense of the word, as well as being a family issue in that it impacts the families of the women who have been affected by this terrible disease.

Minister, one of things I would like to ask you is what kind of advocacy work you have done in this

regard. We have had waiting lists, in fact quite unacceptable waiting lists, for radiation treatment in this province for some time. It appears the problem is being exacerbated instead of improving. We have women who are uprooted at a very vulnerable time in their lives and forced to go some distance to receive treatment, quite often to northern Ontario, where they're away from their families and their friends at a very traumatic time for them. If they choose not to accept that, then they have to wait and wait past the optimum time for trying to give effective treatment.

I would like to ask you, what kind of advocacy measures have you and the Ontario women's directorate taken in this regard to try to get this situation remedied?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Certainly, given my position on the policy and priorities committee, where we are attempting, as well as we can, to deal with the kinds of issues that have been raised many times in the House around the difficulty of getting trained oncologists, of ensuring that these facilities are available within communities and so on, I'm a constant advocate in terms of this issue.

As you can imagine, this is an issue that has touched us in our caucus and our cabinet very closely. It is one we feel very strongly must become more and more of a priority. We often are inclined to point out that although people talk about the tragedy of diseases such as AIDS, the total number of people who have died of AIDS is much lower than the number of women who die of breast cancer in this province in any given period of time.

It is a very serious problem. Partly because of the difficulty that we seem to have talking about breast cancer, because it does involve a secondary sex characteristic, we seem not to have been able to make this the primary problem that it is. I should say that I think we're finding the same thing with male prostate cancer. The same figures have now shown that prostate cancer has outstripped lung cancer in men, partly as a result of changes in smoking habits, no doubt, but it is a similar kind of problem.

Getting people to get examined, helping people to accept self-examination, to accept regular checkups, certainly to accept breast screening after the age of 50, is an uphill battle when we have tended, as a community, to have some real reluctance about talking about our body parts if they have sexual connotations to us.

That's one of the things we're trying to overcome in terms of the work we do around helping young women to be comfortable with their bodies, helping to over-

come the beauty myths and to really look at our bodies as functioning instruments that we have of control over the world. We need to understand that we need to be mindful of those bodies and very conscious of them.

There's a lot of work that goes on in that kind of area. Obviously, the Ministry of Health is the one that has the line responsibility here. The women's health bureau has done a great deal of work in terms of the awareness campaigns that they have. I know that with the issue of breast cancer, there's a major publicity campaign that will be coming forward on breast cancer in the next very little while to try to encourage more awareness, more acceptance of dealing with this in an open way as a problem.

We continue to do that, to encourage that as budget decisions are made, they are made being aware of the differential impact on women's health in those kinds of situations, and certainly this most recent crisis and concern. The Minister of Health is always well aware that we're advocating very strongly on behalf of women as a priority in this area.

**Ms Poole:** I certainly accept what the minister has just said as valid and she's articulated it very well. I guess I'm not disagreeing with you about some of the problems associated with bringing this forward as a priority issue, but I also believe that a number of policies of your government, Minister, have led to part of the problem.

We have a difficulty in that there aren't sufficient numbers of specialists, that there aren't sufficient numbers of machines available right now to take care of the problem. Just today, the Leader of the Opposition, Lyn McLeod, raised in the House that of the graduating class of this past June of radiation oncologists, there were 11 and only four of those 11 are actually staying in the province of Ontario to practise; the rest are leaving. I think it is this type of thing that is very worrisome.

The example I raised for you the last time we met of the government's proposal, when it was negotiating with the OMA, that there be restrictions on new paediatricians, psychiatrists and family practice doctors—all of those practices, I might say, are very heavily dominated by women. That particular policy to curb those professions, I think, was one that signalled to many new doctors in this province that they are not welcome, that there are other jurisdictions which will appreciate their services to a greater extent. I think this is part of the reason why we are finding our new graduates are looking for greener fields. I personally can't blame them.

The other problem, of course, is that there have been significant cutbacks at hospitals. While we're all aware of the need to rationalize the health care system and the costs and put a curb on those costs, at the same time it seems to be an ad hoc crisis intervention, without thinking down the line what the impacts are going to be. We quite recently heard at the Princess Margaret

Hospital some of the problems it's been having, not only with bone marrow transplants but with other specialties and what dramatic action it's going to have to take in order to try to make ends meet.

I guess my question, rather than relating to the difficulty of making breast cancer a priority in the minds and hearts and souls of a lot of people across this province, rather than that particular aspect, I would like to ask you what you have done to advocate that we should be encouraging our specialists to stay and to practise in Ontario; what encouragement and incentives you have advocated to the cabinet that it should be providing in order to ensure these specialists are available in this particular area; and what success you've had at the cabinet table, at policy and priorities committee and with treasury board to ensure that the funding and the philosophy are both there to ensure that women's needs are being met in this regard.

1550

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I'm sure the member is not asking me to give a verbatim report of what I've said at cabinet. Obviously that's not appropriate. I have advocated very strongly as a member of treasury board in terms of the dollar amounts in terms of the changes that have happened. Obviously the original position of the Ministry of Health was not the position this government took. Finally, in its negotiations with the doctors, we did not agree in the long run that that was the way to ensure that scarce medical attention was available to people, either in northern areas or in specialties like radiation oncology, and that did not happen.

So when you ask what success I had, I'm certainly not going to take the credit for that because we operate our government on a team basis and we made that decision with all of us working together. But I can assure you that my advocacy at the table was certainly on behalf of those who are underserved: women, where that is the case, and children and men when that is the issue there. That is part of the work that one needs to do.

During all of the time that I've been women's issues minister, I've also had responsibilities as a line minister in other ministries, one of which was Community and Social Services, and many of those who are affected by breast cancer and other illnesses, many women, are also clients of that ministry because of their inability to work and their need for supportive services, counselling services and other community services.

So there's a double edge to the kind of advocacy you do, not just on the part of women who have single-issue problems like breast cancer but recognizing that when that occurs in a person's life it's a devastating issue and there are many supports that are required. So there's a great breadth of advocacy that needs to be done, not just in the direct area.

I'd like to remind the member that the 1985 study, when it looked at the whole situation, made recommen-



dations. Since that time, 18 new radiation machines have been made available. There are 13 more that are in process that should be up and running by 1997-98. This is a very expensive proposition and we're prepared to put our dollars into that capital, knowing we're putting those dollars into the health of the province of Ontario and particularly the women of Ontario.

The support for the training and the expansion of training for radiation technologists and so on was a direct outcome of our recognition that we need to be much more proactive in terms of ensuring that we have the professional staff we require in order to offer the appropriate services. I advocate very strongly at every opportunity I have on this as well as the other issues but would repeat again, it is not my primary responsibility to deliver, to announce, those kinds of programs.

**Ms Poole:** I'll just make one final comment on this particular aspect. The minister has said that the government made the decision not to proceed with the policy, which I might call a draconian policy, towards young new doctors and that she obviously had a role in advocating in that regard, and I don't dispute that.

But the problem is, Minister, what I have seen with your government in a number of instances is that certain things are used as negotiating tools, certain proposals, draft policies, and in my opinion the government probably doesn't intend to proceed with them but they're a negotiating tool to bring the other partner to a stage where it will get an acceptable compromise.

The problem is, when you go to the OMA with a proposal like that and it becomes public, in the minds of people they have something to fear. So even though in the final analysis, after several months, the government decided not to proceed in that direction, in the meantime that fear has been raised and it's quite intimidating for people.

There's no doubt in my mind that those oncologists who were just coming on stream in the graduating class in June were influenced by the fear that young doctors would not be encouraged and given incentives to practice in Ontario. It's just a final comment in that regard, but I think it does have an impact.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I wonder if I could respond to that, because in fact even under that policy, specialists who were in fields that were underserved were to be allowed to practise. So for radiation oncologists, where we have a shortage, that was not the case, as with HIV specialists. They were not included. Even in that original proposal there was a very clear issue around underservice being not only underservice in the north, which was our primary concern, and I must tell you that I think the proposal was sincere.

I agree with you that it wasn't the best proposal, and we reached a compromise proposal that we think accomplished the goals of both those who were con-

cerned about underservice and those who were concerned about young doctors. But even in the original proposal this kind of area was very clearly part of what we were talking about by underservicing, and those physicians would not have been penalized. That was very clear.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, and I certainly never implied that it was not clear that oncologists were not included in that particular proposal. It was limited to the three specific areas. But the fact remains that when that happens, the first thing that goes through people's minds is, "Am I next?" There were young doctors in many other fields who felt the writing was on the wall that there was going to be a phasing out of the number of physicians in Ontario and that if their specialty, by the time they got through extensive medical training, no longer had—what's the opposite of surplus?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** A deficit?

**Ms Poole:** A deficit, thank you. No, that wasn't the word either, Minister, but thank you for your attempt. Anyway, if there was no longer a shortage—that's what I wanted—in that particular field, they would then face that after their extensive training.

I think I have about 10 minutes left—five minutes. I'd like to go into the area of pay equity in a couple of different instances. This is actually an opportunity for the minister to advocate in the future. I don't know; she may be aware of this particular situation, but if not, I'm pleased to be able to bring it to her attention.

I know the minister is familiar with the Pay Equity Advocacy and Legal Services, which many of us know as PEALS. PEALS is a group that was set up in 1990 to help women, with the new Pay Equity Act, in providing both advocacy and legal services. I think it's fair to say it was targeted to the non-unionized women who didn't have advocates to act on their behalf. I think they've been quite an effective organization both in taking matters into the review and also to the tribunal stage. Originally, the legislation was basically to be in effect by 1995 and PEALS's mandate was therefore tied to that particular date. So as of March 1, 1995, PEALS's mandate expires.

The particular problem they have is twofold. One is that it takes an extensive period of time to take a case before the tribunal and it is quite common for it to take between one and three years to get a decision. Obviously, when the lawyers at PEALS are giving a commitment to their clients, it extends for an extensive period in time. They're now at the stage where they have less than a year and a half left, the legislation has now been expanded to include a new group and yet, as of next spring, they won't be able to give those commitments.

The other problem is an operational point of view, which I think from their perspective was the lesser priority. But they would like to know, in advance of



their mandate expiring, that indeed they can give commitments that they will be able to pursue these very lengthy cases.

I wonder if we could have a comment from the minister, if you are aware of their particular situation and if you're willing to go to bat for the Ministry of Labour to extend their mandate as soon as possible so that they know they will be able to act on behalf of these women.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I certainly am aware of that, obviously, with both my hats on. Actually my staff member is reminding me that—I was going to say one week, but in two weeks we actually have a meeting with PEALS from both OWD and the Ministry of Labour to talk about these very issues. Then, of course, there will be the task of looking at the extension of funding and mandate with the clinic services group with the law society.

1600

**Ms Poole:** I'm very pleased to hear that the minister is meeting with them and I hope you can give a commitment in the near future to talk to the Minister of Labour and see if you can in turn secure a commitment from him to give them an early response so they can do their work effectively.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I certainly hope so, too. We need to make some decisions about the best way in which to provide that assistance, whether it continues to be under the current arrangement or whether it becomes a specialty clinic as, for example, ARCH would be and that sort of thing.

The expansion of the mandate under the new legislation makes it much more complicated in many cases because it is a fairly complex process, often determining proxy and proportional. My expectation would be that the needs will certainly be there and there certainly will be an argument for continuing the assistance.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you. I'm very reassured to hear that. One of the other issues you may be discussing at that time is that for the last two years PEALS has had its funding cut by \$55,000, which is 10% of its budget, which has—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** As have all clinics.

**Ms Poole:** That's right. It is particularly onerous when their mandate is actually expanding to cover new legislation as well as the old legislation. It does put a particular onus on them.

With reference to the proxy, the minister talked about the complexity and I certainly agree wholeheartedly with that analysis. In fact, I asked PEALS, when I was meeting with them last week, if they had cases yet before them under the proxy or if it was too premature, and they said they've really just begun that process but they do believe it is going to require a lot of resources on their part.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** They have certainly cautioned us that they thought that might be an issue as the legislation went through, so it's not something we're unaware of. Obviously, the access to legal services continues to be a real problem, given the shrinking budgets that we all have, and how to make that the most appropriate kind of representation is a real challenge to us.

One of the issues I want to look at with PEALS is, when people come forward with similar case situations, whether there is a way in which we can alternately deal with those disputes rather than having to go through the full process that we often have to do and whether we can establish a template, if you like, whereby decisions can be made by the commission on the basis of, "These folks fit this template and therefore this is where we go." It's one of the possibilities we'll be considering with them.

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Waterloo North):** I want to continue from where we left off last week, Minister. Last week you shared with us some information regarding the role of the directorate and also the advantages of being part of the cabinet committee process. You indicated that involvement at the level of the cabinet committee process provided your office with the opportunity to voice your objectives and also to advocate on behalf of women and possibly alter ministry decisions and initiatives that were being made if you perceive reforms to be problematic towards women.

I'd like to deal with a couple of policy decisions that have been adopted by your government at this time, which our party believes will have a very negative impact on women in this province. They stem from your government's determination to eliminate the private sector involvement in the delivery of both health and child care services. Of course, the two areas I'm specifically speaking to are (1) child care and (2) home care.

I have certainly received many letters of concern from women, because this policy decision is going to force many women who are the owners of the child care and the home care services, who have been employers, who have been in a position where they are able to make a difference, to be reduced to the status of employees or even possibly unemployed individuals. I think it's disgraceful that women have been reduced from what I perceive to be, and you could call, a position of power. Suddenly, they're left with absolutely nothing, plus they've lost their life savings.

I'd like to deal with the issue of child care first. We know your government is intent on totally wiping out private child care. It's devastating. In fact, when you were Minister of Community and Social Services you implemented funding decisions and you issued policy directives that have had a very disastrous effect on women who own, and also those who work in, child care centres, because we know that most of the owners and the employees are women.

But what really concerns me is that the debate over the delivery of child care services has really not focused on what is in the best interests of the child. It's been transformed into a war, an all-out war against the private child care workers and the sector that employs those individuals.

We know your government has allocated \$200 million to the purpose of driving the private operators out of business. We know that today, as compared to 1985, there are at least 250 fewer child care centres of a private nature. We know as well that in 1985 there were more than 40,000 licensed child care spaces, or 27%, located in all the private child care centres. That's been reduced in 1990 to less than 30,000.

As I said before, the reduction, the elimination of the private child care sector has translated into the loss of businesses, the loss of seniority for these women, the loss of benefits and the loss of a choice of employment. It has given women less opportunity than they had before. In fact, in some there's no opportunity left whatsoever.

You know, we talk about women and women attaining positions of responsibility through employment equity. Yet this move totally eliminates the opportunity for a woman to own a business and feel good about her accomplishment. It doesn't make any sense to me. There are thousands of families across the province waiting for fee subsidies, and I believe the money you've spent on wiping out the private sector could have been better spent on fee subsidies. I'm disappointed that hasn't happened.

In 1991, there was \$105 million devoted to putting the private operators out of business. There was \$30 million given to all non-profit child care workers; they got the \$2,000 raise. There was \$16 million for non-profit organizations to allow them to purchase toys and equipment from private child care services wishing to convert to non-profit. There was \$31 million to staff of child care services that have converted to non-profit, so that they receive the benefit of full direct operating grants and the \$2,000 salary enhancement once the conversion process is complete; \$10 million for replacement of private services which may close as opposed to converting; and \$10.8 million to assist the non-profit services that were currently in financial difficulty because of declining enrolments attributable to the recession and the distribution of the subsidized spaces. As well, in January 1992, all new fee subsidies were automatically given only to the non-profit sector unless a municipality was able to show that non-profit child care was unavailable in that particular community.

**1610**

It concerns me because I see something happening and I see an ideology that somehow this government believes that parents cannot adequately care for their children. They seem to be demanding that the govern-

ment knows best and that our children should all be in non-profit child care. Personally, I think that's an insult. Parents want to make a decision and they should be the individuals who have the sole responsibility for deciding who cares for their children.

What is the best placement? We know there were outstanding private sector child care facilities—there still are a few—and now that choice for parents has been totally eliminated. It's like Big Brother knows best, or Big Sister. We don't know best. Governments make mistakes and we need to recognize that.

On the other hand, if you take a look at the children who are in desperate need of mental health treatment—and I'm going to speak to that later today or tomorrow—unfortunately, there's been no money devoted to helping those children. Yet we have this experiment that is ridding this province of private child care. I'm extremely concerned about the direction of valuable tax dollars to this particular initiative.

The latest in a type of attack by this government on the private child care sector—and, as I say, it is so unfortunate that these people have been driven out of their businesses—was the announcement of June 24, 1992, where \$97 million, as part of the Jobs Ontario Capital fund, was directed to the non-profit child care sector. This money is being used over the next two years to build non-profit child care centres, to renovate them, to expand them. This, to me, is a very irresponsible use of taxpayers' money at a time when we have thousands of spaces in both the non-profit and the profit-making child care centres and when we see that these places are being closed because of under-utilization. Yet we're building new spaces.

We know you're going to introduce new child care legislation in the future. If the government's past record is any indication, women who own and work in private child care centres are going to really suffer further hardship. We talk about your role, we talk about the role of the women's directorate and yet nobody seems to care about these women who have lost their businesses.

I'd like to ask you to provide me with some information. I'd like to be provided with a list of the number of subsidized spaces in non-profit child care centres, by centre and municipality, for the years 1985 to 1993 and the projected number of spaces in 1993-94.

I'd like a list of the non-profit child care centres that have requested financial bailouts because of financial difficulty since September 1990.

I'd like a list of the private child care centres that have requested a financial bailout because of financial difficulty since September 1990.

I'd like a list of the non-profit child care centres that have been awarded money from the province to contend with financial difficulties since September 1990.



**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** This wouldn't be political, would it?

**Mrs Witmer:** Personally, I'm concerned about the children in this province, not your ideology.

**Mr Bisson:** Oh, Elizabeth.

**Mrs Witmer:** I'd like a list of the private child care centres that have been awarded money from the province to contend with financial difficulty since September 1990.

I'd like a list of the private child care centres that have closed since September 1990; a list of the non-profit child care centres that have closed since 1990; a list of the non-profit child care centres that have opened since September 1990; a list of the private child care centres that are expected to open in the future; a list of the non-profit child care centres expected to open, by centre and municipality; and an accounting of how provincial transfers to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care have been spent by the coalition for the last five fiscal years.

I would also like you to table a record of the number of telephone calls, letters and petitions, including the number of signatures, that have been received by the minister's office expressing either support for or opposition to the decision to give fee subsidies solely to non-profit child care programs, showing the breakdown in terms of the number supporting the measure and the number opposed and the names of the organizations which expressed either support for or opposition to the policy.

**Mr Bisson:** That should keep them going till the coffee break.

**Mrs Witmer:** And I'd like you to table—

**The Chair:** Excuse me. Please, Mr Bisson.

**Mrs Witmer:** —a record of the number of telephone calls, letters and petitions, including the number of signatures, received in the minister's office expressing either support for or opposition to the decision to provide wage enhancement grants for child care workers solely in the non-profit child care sector, showing the breakdown in terms of the number supporting the measure, the number opposed and the names of the organizations which expressed either support for or opposition to the policy.

Maybe I should just mention what our party believes is important. What principles—

**The Chair:** Mrs Witmer, there are four minutes remaining in your time allocation and it's been the custom to at least allow some time for a minister's response. We do have several more hours, but we'd hoped we would allow the minister some time to give some partial response.

**Mrs Witmer:** That's fine.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** First of all, I will certainly see that

the Ministry of Community and Social Services is requested to provide what material it has but, quite frankly, with the kind of detail that you're asking and given the kinds of work this might involve—if it were an FOI request, you know what the kind of response would be in terms of an estimate of cost—I can't guarantee you that we can provide that with the detail you've asked.

Some of that material has been provided to your party already, when I went through estimates last year; it should only need updating. Some of that will be available and I will certainly encourage the ministry to provide it to you.

It is always very interesting to me that when your party discusses ideology, you discuss ideology as though only our ideology is an ideology. The ideology of privatization has been the ideology in this province under the last two parties, with the exception of the work the Liberal Party did in terms of the changes in child care that came into effect throughout 1987. So let's not throw stones about ideology. There are reasons for our ideology. Your ideology is that services are best provided through private enterprise; our ideology is that public money is best spent in a non-profit situation where there's community-based control.

I would remind you that when we talk about non-profit, we're talking about a community base that includes much more input by parents in the model of child care we're talking about. You talk only about certain groups of women who are involved and who may be affected negatively by this policy. There are many, many women, many parents who are going to be affected positively by our policy, because we will be able to ensure that more child care spaces are available to a larger number of people and that those parents will have some control over the kind of child care their families have.

I would also remind you that as services developed in the past, they very often developed privately, and then we as a community, all of us, no matter what our ideology, decided that if we were going to spend taxpayers' money, we needed to have the accountability that accords to taxpayers' money. So hospitals became deprivatized in this country. Public, elementary and secondary schools, for the most part, have become deprivatized, and the same is true of other services as we have moved to more and more community responsibility.

I would say to you that we have a clash of ideologies, absolutely, and that indeed you have expressed very well your ideology in attacking ours.

1620

**The Chair:** You have a minute and a half, Ms Witmer.

**Mrs Witmer:** I guess what I believe needs to always



be uppermost is that we take a look at the quality of care and also make sure that the parents have the sole responsibility for deciding who it is who cares for their preschool child. To me, that's most important and I think we need to treat that in a very equal, non-discriminatory manner, and I believe there is a need for both profit and non-profit in this province. I would not eliminate the for-profit sector.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We have not eliminated it. We have said we will not put additional dollars into the for-profit. We have protected the existing centres. We have made it very clear that they have been grandparented out of this situation, but we will not expand the taxpayers' dollars that go into the private sector and we've made that clear all along. Those who choose, because they can't expand their businesses, to no longer offer those businesses, that is a different issue, but those that were already offering services that met the licensing requirements we in no way disintitled from what they were able to access previously.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** I'd like to explore an area where we haven't gone. It has to do with the impact on women of the job losses because of the North American free trade deal, the potential job losses with the North American free trade deal and the impact that has on families within society and in particular the women within those societies, within those families and the young children. What I would like to do is perhaps ask you if you've done any work on what that impact has been so far on the fact that the province of Ontario has lost, what, some 363,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector because of the high dollar and the high interest rates and the free trade deal.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Absolutely. I think women, of course, being the relative newcomers to the full labour force, have suffered disproportionately. The directorate had originally put out a paper on the free trade deal—what it meant in terms of women's jobs, what the impact would be—and we have only recently updated that. That paper is available in its final draft form, its pre-publishing form. I'd be happy to provide it for members of the committee, and as soon as it's published of course it will be released—we're in the midst of translation right now—to talk about what NAFTA does and what the disproportionate effect on women is.

It is very clear that the traditional kinds of occupations that women have had, particularly in our manufacturing industries, have been in areas where they've been most affected. Areas like textiles, shoes, games, small electrical appliances, those kinds of manufacturing enterprises have tended to be the kinds of enterprises that have suffered most under free trade and we expect will under NAFTA and of course where there are a disproportionate number of the women who work in the manufacturing sector actually working.

So we share your concern. Whenever there is a

complete restructuring such as we're having to go through because of changed trade practices, our job in the directorate is to look at how that may affect the group of people on whose behalf we advocate.

Our real concern is in the new area that has never been really looked at before in terms of trade, and that's trade in services, because by far the largest number of women are involved in services: services like computing services, the kind of data entry, the kind of telecommunications tasks that we see as a growing part, as well as services like home care or child care, where again there is some concern about the provision of services. That is obviously an important aspect of the work that we do in terms of providing the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade with as much advice and information as we can and to advocate as strenuously as we can that our industrial strategy and our trade strategy keep very clearly in focus the disproportionate effect of this kind of change on women.

**Mr Wiseman:** Do you also have within that study an analysis of how large the needlework underground economy and the piecework economy have grown since the free trade deal in terms of trying to keep some of the garment industry competitive in the market?

I understand that as recently as just a few years ago, what was happening in this area was that it almost became clandestine. Whole outfits would have to be put together and it would be on a piecework basis. Hours and hours of labour to do this would wind up having somebody paid maybe 50 cents an hour and it would be a very small amount of money coming to the person who was doing all the work. If they didn't do it, then they would suffer huge consequences in terms of losing future work and contracts, and the consequences of that of course would be that you would have women working hours and hours and receiving little benefit, with no rights and no protection and labour laws don't apply.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** In working with the home workers associations and groups like Intercede and so on, they are very concerned about this. There's actually a study that's ongoing right now of the growth in home work and the numbers of women who would have done textile work in particular, and shoes I believe as well, where they would be in a group situation and they would have the strength of numbers and there would be the possibility of labour inspections—that sort of thing moving into the home and working on exactly the basis that you talk about.

We've always had piecework in our economy. That's not a new thing. It's the growth of that piecework and our apparent inability, with our current Employment Standards Act, to control the kinds of things that are happening. It's kind of like some of the subcontracting in the construction industry. Most of the work will be subcontracted down and down, so it's hard to get a trace

on who the original employer is. When someone doesn't get paid at the bottom of that pyramid, one of the pieceworkers, it's very hard to know who the responsible person is to go after.

We have been advocating very strongly with the Ministry of Labour around improvement employment standards. One of the things that we are advocating very strongly on behalf of women is that there be a requirement for the main manufacturer to guarantee that payment. We're working on a number of different mechanisms to try and ensure that that happens. I think we should all be concerned about that.

We tend to think, though, of home work only in that field of those small manufacturing things, and again I would say to you quite directly that I think, in services, particularly mailing services, typing services, computer and data entry services, we are seeing more and more women isolated at home and doing that work at home without the protection and the benefits of having a workplace that is easily organized and where there is the possibility of collective action to protect their rights. The more isolated people become, the less able they are to access their own rights in a complaints-driven system such as we have.

**Mr Wiseman:** To move in another direction, and I hope to come back to those because I have more questions, but another issue, and I think it's emerging and I don't know if you've done any work on this, is pollution and the impact of pollution on women and on foetuses. What is becoming more and more apparent is that while we thought the pollution levels of the Great Lakes was reducing, what we're finding is that some of it is being reduced in terms of phosphates and so on, but what we're getting is a much more dangerous kind of pollution with dioxins and fluorines that are actually not just carcinogenic but also will deform foetuses. We've had, for example, reports just this year of women who have delivered babies that clearly have been affected by pollution. Has the women's directorate started any work, or how far in are you in terms of being able to assess what the unique impacts are of pollution on women and their role in terms of the nurturing of our children?

1630

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We work very, very closely with the groups that are working on both the environmental issues and how those environmental issues impact on health. In the area that you were talking about, one of the things that we know is that the increase in breast cancer is thought by many to be very clearly an indication of how the increased carcinogens within the air and the water in fact are affecting women. There's real evidence, in terms of the research that's been done on breast cancer, that that's one of the forms of cancer that shows up that kind of effect of a polluted environment very quickly.

The other issue of course is that we have a growing tendency, I think, not to honour the role of motherhood and the role of mothers in feeding their children. There is no question that when we know we have polluted water systems, to be feeding our babies artificial formula using that water to weaken that formula is a very dangerous thing. Many of us in North America very self-righteously talked about that as a problem in developing countries and participated in the real issue around when you don't have a clean water supply, how do you deal with the issue of feeding infants; the same problem we have here. So those are areas in which we work very closely. We don't take a prime role because our main function obviously is not environmental, but I think I would say very clearly that women are very, very conscious of a particular trust for us in terms of protecting the environment for our children and our grandchildren and our descendants for ever. I think the environmental movement has been fuelled very much by that commitment and that necessity to maintain health and safety.

**Mr Wiseman:** I had more, but I will come back to those things.

**Mrs Karen Haslam (Perth):** I've got a lot of things to talk about too, but the one I'd like to start on first of all is something that I was talking about last time and that was young women. I notice in the information that you gave us, first of all, the TV and radio ads for wife assault-sexual assault prevention, on the second page it says, "See attached evaluations." We did not receive that.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Okay. We will see that you do.

**Mrs Haslam:** Thank you. We didn't get the results; we only got the costs.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Okay. We should get you the—because the evaluation results are certainly available and everybody's looking puzzled that you didn't get them.

**Mrs Haslam:** They're not attached to any of the—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** We're not picking that up.

**Ms Poole:** The opposition parties I think were both given a copy of this, so perhaps we can give the government—

**Mrs Haslam:** And the government party wasn't.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We thought it was in your package. We're sorry.

**Ms Poole:** You've been discriminated against.

**Mrs Haslam:** That's okay. I'll come over there and read it.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We will get it for you; you need not cross the floor.

**Mrs Haslam:** Thank you. I'd appreciate a copy of that.

**The Chair:** One at a time.



**Mrs Haslam:** I'll go back to what my original question was, and that was around young women. I've got an article here and I'm going to read a little bit about it. This is from the *Standard*, which is from St Catharines. Ms Haeck was kind enough to share it because she knew my interest in young people. But I'm talking not about college age, which I see covered in some of the information I have been given, but I'm more interested in younger women and I'm talking—I call them young women because I don't want to call them children; they're not children any more.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** "Youth" I believe is the term.

**Mrs Haslam:** "Youth" it is, then. This one is called "More Teens Having Babies" and "Recession May Be to Blame." I've got some parts that were highlighted and I'd like to just read some of them.

"Teen pregnancies in Niagara have increased and health officials say the region's poor economy could be a factor...."

"She said some sexuality experts say the recession has led teenage women to view getting pregnant as a career option."

"Bill Fisher, for instance, a psychology professor at the University of Western Ontario, says a poor economy and the dim prospect of a stable job might make teenage girls think the only way to personal fulfilment is to have a baby," and that relates directly to one thing I had questioned, and that was self-esteem in our young women.

"The report says that only about 10% of teens who become pregnant give the babies up for adoption. 'Those who keep their babies may see motherhood as an escape from an abusive situation, a way of receiving financial aid or a way of giving meaning to their lives....'

"In 1980, 15.6 of 1,000 Niagara teens had an abortion; that jumped to 18.2 per 1,000 in 1991...."

"For other age groups from 20 to 44, most showed jumps of about 50% in the five-year span."

I'm finding these types of articles—Christel shared this one with me—and they raise a concern with me. That brings me back to your violence against women prevention strategy, which you're putting in place by 1994. The question I have is, are we applying that strategy to the young people? The reason I'm asking is that it seems to me that under some of the other answers you gave statistics on sexually assaulted teens, and I'll maybe come back to that too. I want to know what is geared to the high school level versus when you talk about young women; you talk about 20-year-olds and this obviously is talking about 15- to 19-year-olds.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We have the same difficulty, obviously, that social agencies and school boards and so on have. In terms of dealing with an issue, we had a very strong plea that parents ought to be responsible for

their children. There is a strong feeling within a certain part of the community that is very leery of the government, whether it's in the guise of social services, educational services or any other form of services, becoming involved in dealing with the whole very sensitive issue around reproduction.

When school boards take very strong views about ensuring that there are educational programs available to young people around their sexuality, there are inevitably very strong objections to that from some parts of the community, and that has tended to make many people leery. At the same time, for a number of reasons in a changing community, that feeling has provided a gap where there doesn't seem to be that kind of support to young people.

I said here last year, when we were in estimates for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, that focus on youth has not tended to be there for any of our governments in recent years, except in the corrections and justice area as opposed to the prevention area, and it is my belief that we have to look at how to change our resources and give our youth more support, help them to understand how to make the choices that are now available to them because of technology, because of medical services that are available, and help them to feel supported.

Of the reasons you read out for why young women might actually seek to become pregnant or might choose to maintain a pregnancy, even if it was not anticipated, the one you mentioned last, giving meaning to life, is the one most cited by the young women I've worked with. They are afraid that the world doesn't hold very much for them, they want something to hold on to and they feel they have something to contribute but no one is listening to them. "Here is something I can contribute to by looking after." I think we have to take that very seriously.

When I talk about advocating on behalf of women, I think we should be advocating for all women to understand the breadth of choices they can make, what the consequences of those choices are and then provide the kind of support to make those choices real. We don't do that at the present time in many of our service sectors, and that's certainly an area we try to work on.

**Mrs Haslam:** That brings me back to—there are a couple of things—what I said: Again, it's the self-esteem at a very vulnerable age, 15 to 19, and I'm concerned that we're advocating for women but we're reaching some of these young women too late to help them in how they see themselves, how they picture themselves and that self-esteem these youths have.

You mentioned the feeling of strong family morals and families objecting. My riding is a rural riding and we have very strong moral values, yet I know the increase is there, even in my riding. You're right about them saying "too much government interference," but



I'm not talking about an interference program; I'm talking more along the educational program lines, going back to the amount of money spent on your ads when the ads were very clearly geared to a higher age.

1640

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** No, as I said to you before, there was a whole group of ads that were done directly for teenagers that were broadcast. I have to confess that except on the tapes I didn't hear them—

**Mrs Haslam:** Me neither, and that's why I'm asking.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** —because I don't happen to listen to their stations. But we have the times that were bought in terms of those high-volume, teen-listening ads, and when you get the response on the advertising, you'll find that they are very effective.

We get requests all the time from teachers to use these as discussion starters within the classroom. When we talk to our shelters, our sexual assault centres, they are swamped with requests—and increasingly from public schools, not just high schools—to go in and talk about these issues, to use some of the things we've done.

We did a series of films on healthy sexuality for teens. It's a series of five videos, for example, talking about healthy sexuality that are available to anyone who wants to use them. They're accompanied by teaching guides and pamphlets and so on. We should get you a list of the materials so that you will be able to know how to access them within your community.

**The Chair:** Briefly, Ms Haslam.

**Mrs Haslam:** I wanted to just briefly say I understand what you're saying. I want to read something here that shows you what we have to combat when we're talking about videos in schools and talking openly about their sexuality. When he saw these types of facts and figures in St Catharines, a councillor said: "There's something about making this private thing public...that's bound to cause problems. If you make it public, you make it trite. You reduce it to its almost animal state." There in a nutshell is what we're combatting. We have to be very clear that, by talking about choices and talking about their sexuality, it's important that we are educating. This is the type of comment we have to take into consideration when we're talking about that.

**The Chair:** I have on the list Mr Bisson and Mr Hayes, whom I did not get to. I'll be recognizing you first when we come back to you in the cycle. Ms Poole, please.

**Ms Poole:** What are we going to do, 20-minute rotations again, or a bit longer?

**The Chair:** Yes, 20 minutes.

**Ms Poole:** Minister, I'd like to continue on pay equity. Just last month, in September, a regulation was passed concerning pay equity which has caused great

dismay among the advocacy groups on pay equity. As members are aware, when the Pay Equity Act was originally passed the mechanism was to compare male jobs to female jobs and there were four different categories in which they compared those jobs. The pay was then determined on the value of the skill, responsibility, all the different variables.

The regulation that was passed in September was to prevent women from automatically receiving the pay raises men get through grievances over job classifications. It was estimated that this particular change would save the provincial government \$109 million. This was money that otherwise might have been awarded to female workers to make sure their wages match those of men performing work of similar value.

From two vantage points, this has really upset the advocates in the pay equity community: first of all, with both the content and impact of this particular regulation, but second, with the process and the manner in which this change took place.

First of all, there was no consultation. The pay equity coalition, which was such a key player when both Bill 168 and Bill 102 came forward, was not consulted. Pay Equity Advocacy and Legal Services was not consulted. From what we have been able to determine, none of the pay equity advocacy groups was consulted about this particular regulation and its impact.

Second, this regulation goes against not only the intent of the act; I say it goes against the very principle of the act. It was done behind closed doors, through regulation. I don't know if the minister knows how I feel about things being done by regulation, but in case you don't, I'll reiterate it. I feel very strongly—I did under the previous government and I do under this government and I will feel this way under whatever government succeeds this one—that things should be done up front, before the public, through legislation, not through regulation. I find it very disconcerting that to address one particular case, which was between the government and OPSEU, this regulation was brought in behind closed doors without consultation and without public scrutiny.

I would like to ask the minister, first, if you were aware of this regulation and its impact prior to its passage by cabinet, and second, if you were aware, what steps you did to advocate on behalf of women in this instance.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Since I reject your analysis of what the impact of the regulation is and how it was developed, it's very difficult for me to answer that. Yes, of course I knew about it ahead of time, but I simply disagree with the analysis you have.

I also disagree with your comments about the use of regulations. Regulations are used primarily because there may be shifting needs as time goes on, and

governments that put things into legislation and then have to go back and change every detail of an implementation plan and the guidelines that follow an implementation plan through legislation are very foolish.

We agree with you, however, that things should be more open, and you will know that we've taken a very different tack with our employment equity regulations, where we have clearly put forward draft regulations, have clearly been prepared to discuss those and have clearly prepared to make that part of the act. You chose not to do that when you passed the Pay Equity Act initially, and I think we have learned from that experience that it is better, when you have things that affect a large number of people like this, to try and be more up front in terms of the kind of work we do in regulations. We need to have more discussion of those.

But in the case of the particular issue, given the difficulties that we were encountering with our own employees, it was certainly our decision that this was an appropriate and accountable decision to make in terms of that regulation, and we did so.

**Ms Poole:** First of all, Minister, with respect to regulations, I have no problem with regulations that operate as regulations were originally intended to operate, as basically a how-to manual. It fleshes out legislation; it gives details about how that legislation is to operate. I have very serious concerns with regulations that go against the spirit of the legislation, and I submit to you, and there are going to be many women's groups who feel the same way about this particular regulation, that it does go against the spirit.

This is not a case of shifting needs. The Pay Equity Amendment Act, Bill 102, was passed in, I believe it was, June of this year. This regulation was passed as of September 1 of this year. Needs did not shift in those two months. The government was aware of that particular case at the time the pay equity legislation was introduced and passed, and it did nothing to put it in the legislation. It is the same, I submit to you, as bringing in Bill 169 in a different context.

Bill 169, to refresh members' memories if you haven't been active with that particular bill, was brought in to counter a decision by the pay equity tribunal that, for instance, children's aid society workers were employees of the province. What Bill 169 did was give the provincial government a right that no other employer in the province had, which is to say, "I am the employer and I will determine who are my employees." So after the fact, to counter pay equity tribunal decisions, Bill 169 was passed. I think this is the same type of thing. To me—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It is simply nonsense that this is what Bill 169 did. No private employer is ever in danger of having another private employer's employees over here suddenly decide that they should be the employees of this particular employer. It simply gave the

right of an employer to a crown employer that every other employer has. So I simply reject your statement about Bill 169 and I do reject your statement about the regulation being anything but an implementation regulation.

**1650**

**Ms Poole:** The minister may reject my comments on Bill 169, but I can tell you there were certainly many other interest groups, including OPSEU and a number of the unions, that had a lot of problems with that bill and what it did and how it was to do it. I can't see how you can say that this regulation does not have a dramatic impact on women who are trying to achieve pay equity.

What it says is if you have the comparison group, the female comparator to the male comparator, and they have been compared as having equal responsibility and working conditions and all the other variables that go into the mix, and it is decided that they are comparable and that their wages should match, if there is subsequently an arbitration which says, "No, this male comparator's wages should go up," then the female wages stay where they were. That, to me, is going to create new inequities. It is going to run contrary to what pay equity was to have done, and I have a lot of problem with that.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** But what you're talking about is a reclassification. The arbitration finding is a reclassification of those jobs. The comparator was determined on the basis of there being comparators by classification. If the classification changes, then the comparator no longer applies. It's an issue of sheer logic. If the arbitration is that a classification has changed—and many of the classifications in government appointments, as you know, have not been updated for 20 or 25 years in many cases; the entire nature of the job has changed completely—then the comparison is no longer valid and another comparator needs to be found.

**Ms Poole:** But, Minister, what OPSEU has said is that OPSEU filed a classification grievance claiming that the construction technicians, whose pays start at \$34,000 annually, were underpaid before the province adopted its pay equity legislation. They aren't talking about creating new classifications; they are talking about the pay scale in that classification, and the women were compared to that. It is going to be a serious problem. I am disappointed that the minister would not have advocated, because I think it is going to have an impact on women, particularly non-unionized women, who will not have a negotiator in future negotiations who will take up their cause in this regard. I think it's going to be quite serious.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Since this is limited to, as you pointed out yourself, the classification area, it is not going to be non-organized members. I mean, you're stretching a point.



**Ms Poole:** The minister just acknowledged that we're talking about the one classification. What I am saying to the minister is that with this—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** No, no. I'm saying classification grievances.

**Ms Poole:** How much time, Mr Chair?

**The Chair:** You've got another seven or eight minutes.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** You only have classification grievances where you have a unionized workforce that has classifications.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, but it is the opinion of PEALS, another advocacy group, that this is going to have a very negative impact on other cases—in fact, they have just written a letter to the Premier in this regard—and that it is not simply the one case with OPSEU and the government that is going to be impacted; it has a much wider impact.

I'd like to go on. I have two other areas I was hoping to cover in this particular round. One relates to home workers, which was mentioned briefly a bit earlier. What I would like to ask you about is the status of legislation to remedy the problems that home workers have. The Coalition for Fair Wages and Working Conditions for Home Workers has been advocating changes, as you know, for a number of years. They have made it very clear that home workers should have a right to overtime pay, to statutory holidays, to employment insurance, that they should not have to work for subminimum wages, that their conditions should be improved and that they should be covered by provincial legislation the same as any other occupation.

It was mentioned earlier that the home worker area is growing significantly, and I think it's an area where we do need action. I don't know; I might be presumptuous to say you have all-party support on it, but certainly you would have my strong support and the support of our caucus in finding relief for these home workers.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I'm delighted to hear that because in fact we may be seeking that. Our only hope, given the crowded legislative agenda, of anything in the very near future would be if we could come to an agreement about how to protect these workers. Certainly it would be my hope and the hope of the Minister of Labour that we in fact could fashion a piece of legislation that would strengthen the Employment Standards Act in this area. I think you are too sanguine.

**Ms Poole:** Sanguine?

**Mr Wiseman:** It would be nice if we could get the same commitment from the Tory party at this time, wouldn't it?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It certainly would.

**The Chair:** It would be nice if I could get an interpretation of "sanguine." I thought it was one of Mr

Bisson's words for a moment.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** "Hopeful," not "bloody."

**Ms Poole:** I've never been called sanguine before. Earlier this week somebody called me statesmanlike. I'd never been called that before either, so it's been a red-banner week for me.

**Mr Wiseman:** I was sort of hoping the Tory party would comment on my interjection at this time.

**Ms Poole:** They might on their particular time, Mr Wiseman.

**The Chair:** I did recognize you once before, Mr Wiseman. If you'd like to be on the speakers' list, please let me know. But I still have Ms Poole, who has a good five and a half minutes left.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you; hopefully a very good one. Minister, what I would like to know: The Minister of Labour, over a year ago, committed to remedying these changes. It was quite public. He did it at a press conference and it was reported quite widely that he would act very quickly. There was a consultation document produced but we're still, a year later, without it having even been introduced for public discussion. As you alluded to yourself, it takes extensive time to get a piece of legislation through. Could you give me a timetable for when this legislation will be introduced and your commitment to push for an early—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I can certainly give you my commitment to push for an early legislative slot. That certainly is the position that the directorate has taken and that I personally have taken from the beginning.

I should say to you that it is not true that we simply issued a consultation document. The consultation has been ongoing and the consultation, as I understand it, was completed in late August. It does take some time, once you get the results of a consultation, to fashion the kind of legislation, particularly if we were hoping to get all-party agreement, that might meet the needs of the group that we're trying to help and not entirely alienate the industry that we're trying to regulate.

I'll be very frank with you: I would hope that we would be able to do at least first reading in this session. I am not at all sure that we will be ready to do so, particularly if there are protracted negotiations to see whether all-party consent can be reached. But I would hope certainly in the next session, if not this session, we would have that on the table very clearly and that all parties would be able to make known their positions.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you. I'd like at least to begin the last area I'd hoped to go through today, and that is the grants by the Ontario women's directorate.

Through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act we were given a copy of the various grants from October 1990 to present, and certainly many of them appear to be very worthwhile endeavours. But there were some surprises for me when I was going



through the grants. For instance, there seemed to be a number of grants that didn't have much, if anything, to do with women. I was wondering if you would like to comment on this. I would give you some examples. We can provide a more extensive list afterwards, but I'll just bring a few to your attention at this time.

**1700**

For instance, Edwards, a division of General Signal: The Ontario women's directorate gave them \$20,000 to develop a role-modelling case study of methods developed for reducing repetitive strain injuries among employees, and then another \$5,300 in addition to the \$20,000 for printing and distribution of resources to other workplaces about information in this regard. It just seemed to me that over \$25,000 came out of the Ontario women's directorate budget when I would have thought it should have been Ministry of Labour, because I've never seen statistics that show that back injuries are restricted to women. In fact, I think they're probably gender-neutral.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** The repetitive strain that was most emphasized was carpal tunnel syndrome. The workers in the area were primarily women, textile and keyboarding things and so on. So the grant was specifically directed to a women's health problem, and that is exactly why it was done. In fact, it has been very helpful in terms of the work throughout many industries. So we do focus on women's health problems. I would agree with you: I would hope that other ministries would look at this too. When they don't, we fill the gap.

**Ms Poole:** I must say it's refreshing to have a minister who knows her ministry and her responsibilities so well that she can, at the tip of her fingers, have that kind of information.

Another one that I'd ask you about at this time is the Kingston Area School to Employment Council, a workshop titled Kids Exploring Technology Camp. Now, I know the work of the Kingston Area School to Employment Council; I'm very supportive of it. I'm not denigrating the proposal, but I'm just wondering why that would come under the Ontario women's directorate, even presupposing that we do want more women to go into the high-tech fields.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Well, we certainly do. One of our primary objectives in terms of education and training equity is in fact in that area of math, science and technology. A lot of our resources have been directed in that area. We need to find ways to help young women to be comfortable in technology, not only when there are only women there.

What we have found in programs like women in trades and technology is that the women do very well when they're by themselves and are learning their trade. When they get out into the practical workforce and have to work with men in the trade, their confidence seems to slip away.

So in looking at a project like that, first of all it would be encouraging women. I can't tell you what the balance of young women to young men was in the project, and in fact it may have been that the vast majority were young women; I would have to get that information for you. But in any case, one of the issues that we have is that while segregated programs for women are important in the early stages of learning to build up confidence, we need gradually to ensure that women are getting practical experience in a non-segregated kind of place so that they can maintain that.

When we look at the studies of what happens to young women in math and science and we see them competing in the classroom or in other areas, we often find that they don't get as much airtime; they don't know how to be assertive about putting their needs forward and ensuring that they have an equal opportunity at the kinds of tasks that are available. So as a learning experience, knowing that particular area—which I also support; I think they do wonderful work—I suspect that was the focus, but we'll get a little bit of information for you on the balance of how many were served.

**Ms Poole:** Thank you. I guess we'll follow this up a bit later.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Poole. I know you have further questions in this area, but I must move to Ms Witmer.

**Mrs Witmer:** I'd just like to comment on the home care workers. This is an issue that was brought to the attention of I guess all parties when we were first elected in 1990. Certainly these workers have met with myself and with my colleagues; in fact, Mr Arnott met with them not too long ago. We've been quite disappointed: The minister made a public statement at least a year ago indicating that legislation would be forthcoming, and we were surprised that he decided to give priority to Bill 80, which really is a union bill impacting more on the male population, as opposed to dealing with this particular piece of legislation. There's certainly been ample opportunity for the Labour minister to deal with this issue.

As I say, these women are most concerned, and I think it's high time the needs of these women are recognized and some legislation produced on their behalf. I think that's necessary, just to set the record straight.

I'd like to take a look at home care because again this is a sector that's going to be hit as a result of the government's desire to drive the private sector out of business. Unfortunately—I guess the government has not done studies, or maybe it is aware of the fact—there is an indication that women are going to be the big losers when the private home care sector is eliminated or reduced in terms of the delivery of service, because private home care agencies, on the whole, are owned and staffed at present primarily by women. There seems

to be no recognition of the fact that women have done this extremely well.

You probably know that many women in this province who are going to be impacted by the attempt to greatly reduce the role of the private sector in the delivery of in-home care services are concerned. One of the questions I have for the minister is, what studies have been done to assess the impact on either these women who are going to lose the business they have or the women who are employed in the private sector?

I'm most concerned about the impact on these individuals. These people were shocked to hear from a senior adviser to the Premier in November 1992 that their market share of the home care services was going to be reduced from the current 45% to 10% in about two years. When later questioned, the senior policy advisers to both the Premier and then Health minister Lankin were not able to confirm or deny that indeed this was the fact. However, we know that Health minister Lankin did come before the standing committee on social development and indicate her preference for the non-profit delivery of services, and of course in June of this year the Minister of Health announced the fact that this was indeed going to happen.

It's going to impact at least 6,000 home support and agency administrative staff. These people—and again it's going to be primarily women—are going to lose their jobs.

It's important to recognize that the private sector often has assumed responsibility for the jobs that the non-profit sector has rejected; for instance, the jobs at night and the jobs on the weekend. They have played a very significant and very important role in the delivery of the home care service in this province, particularly at a time when we need to be doing everything possible in order to provide care for the elderly in particular and the infirm.

It's important to recognize as well, if this is based on the fact that profit is bad and we need to get rid of profit and we need to have full bureaucratic control, that at present the profits from the home care companies range from 1% to 5%. It's not a profitable operation.

I would certainly appreciate hearing from the minister what discussions have gone on with the individuals who are going to be impacted and why these women are being driven out of their business. They're going to be put in a position where they will either become an employee or be totally unemployed. It doesn't do much to enhance the position of women in our society if we're driving them out of the businesses they've constructed; in fact, it's quite devastating to these women, I would suggest.

1710

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** First of all, it's not the question of driving people out at all. We are saying that, given that

we're putting an additional \$647 million into long-term care, a proportion of which is in the home care area, we will not expand in the private sector area but will expand only in the public area, and that we hope to see a balance that indeed will be primarily, over time, the public sector. But expansion of that is different from driving people currently in business out of business. If their business is, as with child care, dependent on being able to constantly expand, if that's what their business plan is based on, then indeed there may be difficulties for them.

I'd be interested in knowing how many of the 6,000 employees you're talking about own the businesses and may be affected, because the vast number of home care support workers will still be required, still be necessary within the sector and could expect very much to be hired within the sector and so on. They are unlikely to be affected. There'd be a small number of owners and possibly managers, although with an expanding sector, to the extent that home care is planned to expand, there should be plenty of availability of work. That is an issue that continues to come up when we talk about this. It's as though the individuals are somehow tied to a particular workplace, and we know that's not the case in service work, in any case.

I am not aware that there's been a specific kind of impact study done in this particular sector that would meet the requirements you're asking for. We certainly have a clear idea of what the balance is in different parts of the province. In most of the province, the balance that is sought by the Ministry of Health is well below the level of private enterprise that you're talking about. There are a few pockets and a few significant areas of the province where in fact there is a higher proportion of care offered by private care, and obviously there the same kind of effort would be made to try to convert and see the ways in which the needs of everyone can be accommodated within the system.

The notion is not to put people out of business but indeed to achieve the community accountability, the community openness of operation, the availability of every dollar that we as taxpayers spend going into the delivery of service to individuals, rather than, whether it's 1%, 5% or 25%, to a private individual. Again, it is that we are up against this different perspective of how taxpayers' dollars should be spent. We believe taxpayers' dollars should all go to service delivery to the primary clients of the service, not into private profit. We feel very firmly that this is a very defensible position we're taking, particularly where we're expanding service delivery in an area where services have not been available to large numbers of the Ontario population in the past.

**Mrs Witmer:** I would suggest to you that the private care givers have given excellent, friendly and very supportive care in their communities, and they



operate oftentimes in a substantially less expensive way. Unfortunately, the taxpayers in this province can brace themselves for yet another level of very costly bureaucracy. I think that's a very significant point, because by ensuring that all child care and health care and what have you are going to be provided by the non-profit sector, it is going to increase the cost to people in this province. It's simply going to mean higher taxes. I believe very strongly that if the private sector can provide equal care or better care, that option needs to be available, that you can have a dual system operating as long as the individual is getting quality care.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I certainly would not accept your statement that it means increased bureaucracy. It does mean increased community control. We're talking about non-profit corporations which have voluntary boards; we're not talking about a government-run service in the sense you're talking about. We're talking about a community-based system that is closely tied into the community for which it cares and for which it is accountable.

When you say it costs more, it may well be that in order to treat employees responsibly in terms of their needs and to ensure that you have a stability of care for the clients who are being served by the service, the service may be somewhat more expensive. On the other hand, that's not necessarily the case, and there are many studies which have shown it's not necessarily the case in the child care sector and not necessarily the case in the home care sector.

**Mrs Witmer:** I know that many community volunteer services, including such things as Meals on Wheels, are unfortunately going to become centralized and are going to go under the umbrella of the new level of bureaucracy, so I do envision this costing the taxpayer more money.

I'd like to turn to children's mental health. This is an issue I've personally been concerned about for a long time, probably because I was a teacher and because I am a parent. This is a major problem in this province. Unfortunately, we still today have very long waiting lists for the services and children and their families have been deprived of timely access to appropriate care. As a result, many of these young people have placed an additional burden on our school system, and I think we're seeing the result of some of that right now.

I indicated at one time, quoting from a study, that if a son had witnessed his father's violence, that same boy was 10 times more likely to abuse his wife than the boys of non-violent parents. The example I gave at that time was the mass murderer Marc Lépine, who witnessed his father's violence, and we all know what crime he's committed.

We know there are many young males in this province, unfortunately, and females as well, who have witnessed violence against their mothers. Those children

are among the thousands of children in this province who are desperately waiting for treatment, for access to the mental health centres. In fact, a couple of months ago I had a mother come to me desperate for help for her teenage son. I called around, but I could not find anybody in my community who would even put that boy on a waiting list. The services are simply not available, and she was at her wits' end. I finally was able to find accommodation for him outside my community in another community.

It is a desperate issue. There is simply a lack of children's mental health services at this time. Obviously, this is one of the root causes of the violence we're seeing on our streets and in our schools, and I believe it's absolutely essential that we take some action. When the Premier was the opposition leader, he indicated his concern for the lack of access to mental health services, and I'm sure today he still is very concerned.

We did a study on mental health services; in fact, I made a recommendation that that area be looked at. The committee on social development did take a look at it in 1991. The committee came up with a number of recommendations with respect to improvements that could be made in the area of children's mental health services. However, I'm extremely disappointed, because it is my understanding that very little action, if indeed any, has ever been taken by the government as a result of that study that was done by the committee on social development.

We know that today the provision of mental health services for children remains totally inadequate. As I say, it is one of the root causes of violence, and if we don't treat the root causes—you know, we can do all we want as far as treating those who commit the crimes and have the problems in school is concerned, but we've got to deal with the root causes.

I would ask you, Minister, what have you and the women's directorate done to ensure that children in this province have access to mental health services? What is happening that I don't know about?

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**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I certainly can't accept the full responsibility for policymaking in this area, although as a member, certainly when I was with Education and with Community and Social Services I was very active in terms of the interministerial efforts to meet these needs and continue in that advocacy role with the social policy committee whenever these issues arise.

Our mandate in the past has always been primarily focused on adult women. That was the way the directorate was set up by your government and continued by the Liberal government. Our government has said that we want the priority not just to be violence against women, but knowing that there's a continuum of violence and that the intergenerational phasing of violence is very important, we are trying to refocus in the area of vio-



lence against women, children and the vulnerable. You talk about the lack of mental health services as being the cause of violence, and I would dispute that. I would say to you that it's the effect of the intergenerational violence that these children have often observed and that we have some choices to make within our resources as to how we are going to deal with that issue.

I believe that children's mental health services, as they have been conceived in this province, are not going to deal with the issue, because children's mental health services have always been focused on those who act out, either act out of depression, through suicidal tendencies, or act out in anger and aggression. They are many children who are affected by violence who don't act out in either of those ways. In fact, some of the most perfect children are the ones who have been most cowed by the violence in their lives.

Unless we approach the whole issue of children's mental health in an integrated and holistic way so that we are looking at our children, from a very early age, in terms of the holistic responses that they're having and the factors that give strong mental health through the school system, through all of our community services, our supports to families, nutrition, all of those sorts of things, I don't think we're going to be doing anything except bandaging a haemorrhage at the crisis end of the situation.

Somehow, if we pour our money into the kinds of mental health services we've given children, which have primarily rested on residential services for the very worst children rather than preventive services and supportive services as they go along, we're simply going to use all our resources in dealing with crises instead of resolving some of the problems. We believe our policy about emphasizing child care for those children who may be at risk because of poverty or who may be at risk not because of poverty but because parents are overburdened or because parents themselves have never been parented is a very important preventive issue.

Our emphasis on child care in this government and our desire eventually to have child care available to every child in this province is a desire to begin that preventive step. That's a very important aspect of what we're saying. We believe that if you offer supports, if you offer non-violent ways of dealing with conflict and anger from a very early age, provide a supportive and stimulating atmosphere for children from a very early age, in which they can interact with others and with other adults and their parents, then the chances of their having greater strength are very much there.

I am working. I'm on the children's subcommittee of the Premier's Council on Health, Wellbeing and Social Justice, which is doing a very major look at how we need to refocus in terms of meeting those needs. Instead of focusing on those children who are always called children at risk, how do we look at the whole cohort of

children and develop a healthy way of raising them so that we're not constantly dealing with crisis?

In the meantime, obviously, we have to continue to deal with the ones who have not been helped in that holistic way. We can't suddenly stop dealing with the crises while we transfer everything to prevention. Our problem, as it is for any government, is how you continue to provide the services to those whom the system has failed in the past and yet turn around the whole way in which you serve children.

It's always interesting to me that when we come to the issue of resources, your party is constantly saying, "Stop raising taxes," and yet, "Do this, do this, do this, do this." We're saying that we as a community need to really talk about how we are going to put our money into the kinds of priorities that you're suggesting you support. We simply must do more of that work, and I'm hoping that the work that's coming out of the Premier's council will assist us all as a community to really refocus and set some priorities so that in fact we accept a community responsibility for children.

There's a certain problem when we say, on the one hand, that parents should have total control over their children and the state should not get involved and then, at the other end of the stick, say that when the kid's in trouble the state should provide everything that child needs. We have to begin to balance that and to look at the conflicting values we often state when we say something like that. Those are some of the issues we're dealing with.

I work a lot in this area, even though it's not my primary responsibility, because I see the effect in the justice system of children who have been exposed to violence and haven't been dealt with appropriately. If we look at the cost of just one child who learns about violence at the knee of his parents and what that one child can cost us socially, economically and certainly in terms of personal pain, it's an enormous cost. If we put that investment into stopping the violence early on, which is our primary function at the directorate, trying to put an end to that violence right at the start, we think we're doing a big piece of the puzzle.

**Mr Bisson:** I'd like to follow up a little bit on something my colleague Mrs Haslam had raised a little while ago. As you know, the effective campaign in regard to "without consent" ran starting last fall; I do believe that is when it started. The question I have for you is, is there any kind of indication in regard to the effectiveness of that particular campaign that you can share with us?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** On the ads themselves, yes: We have a very good consumer study. This is the one I was talking about that we'll provide for you. I can give you some anecdotal evidence as well, and that is as a person who's gone into classrooms for many years to talk about this issue with young people. We are finding the

response very different now from what it was when I first started this work a long time ago. We are finding the responsiveness of kids. They want to talk about this issue. They're still nervous about coming out, as it were, as someone who's either been victimized or someone who may be abusive, but they're beginning, in a much franker way than my generation ever did, to talk about the realities of trying to be in a relationship and trying to learn how to relate non-violently with the opposite sex.

**Mr Bisson:** I wonder about that. The reason I raised the question is that I took part in a committee about a year ago, a year and a half ago, of two local high schools in a community that were looking at the question of sexual assault, but also the whole question of teen pregnancy, all of the issues related around that. The sense I got talking to some of the young women is that there was a real reluctance to talk about it, and one of the things they pointed to was that one of the boards—I'm not going to get into the debate here—decided that it was not going to provide sex education in the classroom any more, that sexuality was something that was best left at home.

It brings me back to, has the women's directorate ever looked at trying to develop a policy that could be tied in with the Ministry of Education and Training and other ministries, as necessary, in order to try to deal with the entire issue? Because it's not just one thing. Is there any kind of a policy that's coming forward, or any kind of discussions, to look at the whole question of not only education of young women, but the education of young men?

I'm somewhat surprised sometimes when I walk into schools and speak to grades 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 by some of the attitudes I see in some of our schools around the province, and even in some of the younger grades. It makes me wonder. I know part of it is what they see on television and what they hear on radio. The other part is maybe that we as parents are not taking as much responsibility as we can. But there seems to be a missing block, which is the education system.

Every time I've raised this with educators at board levels or with teachers directly, you get into the debate that it's not the job of the education system to get into this, that this is really something parents should be doing. I beg to differ with that. I'd like to know what the ministry is looking at.

1730

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** The ministry has recently undergone a fairly massive reorganization, as you know, and in part of that reorganization the very small office that used to administer the anti-violence programs was put into an education—I've forgotten what they're actually calling it. Sharon, can you remember?

**Ms Sharon McClelland:** The violence secretariat.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** The violence secretariat, just really getting under way now. Basically, that's exactly what that unit is attempting to do. I'm not sure; they may actually have something written down that will explain exactly how they plan to go about that. We'll try to get you something.

**Mr Bisson:** Is there anybody here from your staff who would be able to share that with us?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Ellen Passmore, do you know more about that? Can you come forward?

**The Chair:** If you'd come forward to the microphone, it would be appreciated.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It is fairly new.

**The Chair:** Please introduce yourself and your position within the ministry.

**Ms Ellen Passmore:** I'm Ellen Passmore. I'm the manager of the education and training equity unit at the women's directorate.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I wonder if Eunadie Johnson, who is also here, who is the director of our anti-violence unit, could come forward as well, because it's a joint kind of thing.

**Ms Eunadie Johnson:** I'm Eunadie Johnson. I'm the manager of the violence against women prevention unit at OWD.

**Mr Bisson:** What I'd like to know, if you just can fill us in a bit, is what work is being done right now by the secretariat in regard to trying to coordinate some kind of policy across ministries into the Ministry of Education that deals with some of this.

**Ms Passmore:** By the OWD, you mean. Eunadie can speak to the particular violence programs and I can speak more generally.

The new body that the minister was referring to is called the equity and access unit, which was developed as a result of the recent reorganization, which includes the violence secretariat but is looking at many issues related to equity and access, including violence, education equity and education of boys and girls, around ensuring equal access to all sorts of education in the system.

It's not clear at this point what exactly this reorganization will result in, but the thing that's important is that the directorate is working really closely and we advocate very strongly. We have started and chair an inter-ministerial committee which has representation from the Ministry of Education to look at how we can promote areas of equity and access and anti-violence to girls and young women in the education system.

**Ms Johnson:** I would like to clarify that the unit we're talking about, the violence secretariat, is at the Ministry of Education and Training. The Ministry of Education is involved on the interministerial committee with the violence against women prevention initiatives.



It has the responsibility in terms of the programs that are in the schools around any curriculum that's developed so that the school boards can deliver those programs prevention education for kids in schools. This piece of work that you're talking about is housed in the Ministry of Education, not at the OWD itself, but there is the connection. We have always made the links between violence against women and how children are part of that violence.

**Mr Bisson:** I would just ask the minister, because I know my colleague has a question, if I'd be able to get any kind of information that the ministry could provide as to where the ministry is going and what work's been done.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Absolutely. We will get you that. They would be delighted, because they are very proud of the work they've done in the past and very pleased with their new direction.

**The Chair:** Anecdotally, we will be able to get into, but may not complete, the estimates of the Ministry of Education and Training. We may have an opportunity for that within the next few weeks.

Next on my list is Mr Hayes.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** The TV ads, the ones on wife abuse and assault and sexual assault: I find them, myself, quite effective. I know others have touched on this. I know you're not going to have the stats to show how effective it is in the real, real near future, but I'm just saying, what kind of feedback are you receiving from groups and individuals on those particular commercials?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** In fact we do have the stats in terms of how effective they are and what the impressions are that people have had, and we've done them over a couple of years so that we're beginning to get that flow. I know when we first ran the ads, for example, there was a real difference between the response of men and women to whether or not men were responsible for their own violence. We saw quite a change in that last year. In fact more men than women believed that men had to take some very clear responsibility for their own actions. That's the kind of change that we can see.

We still find some disturbing things, and one of those is that of course there still is a very strong belief on the part of—it is a minority of people but a number of people—that something women do or what women wear makes them vulnerable to attack or open to attack.

We have the kinds of stats that 97% agreed that physical acts such as kicking, hitting, slapping, punching and rape were wife assault. That wasn't true when I started in this work in the early 1980s. I can remember many Optimist clubs and Rotary clubs and so on, and I'm sure my colleagues can as well, where people would say, "That's just part of the relationship; that's

none of your business." So it has really changed in that sense.

But there still is a distressing number who will say that, but then will say that somehow the victim has to change her behaviour in order to stop the violence, and that's what really concerns us. That still is the nub there. The person who is violent is the person who is responsible for his or her violence. We can always do otherwise. That's what we have to get across.

**Mr Hayes:** My next question is—and I'm sure this has bothered many members here and probably all women especially—it seems that if it's just—I say "just"; I don't mean it's just—but if a man assaults a woman, the police, for example, have no problem in saying, "We'll take that and we're going to go to court with this." The problem is, I have a person in my constituency, for example, who has had both things happen to her, physical assault and sexual assault, and yet there were people who advised that woman, "Don't bring up the sexual assault and don't lay those charges because they will make you feel like you are the guilty one here." I know that has happened to many women, and they have been discouraged because they don't want to go through that turmoil and stress.

How do we reach these people? I'm sure there are some people in the police force, for example, who are frustrated also when they go to court and they feel they have someone that they can be successful in convicting and sometimes these things are thrown out. To me, there's an area where there should be better education right through to the police forces and the whole judicial system to support women so they won't feel like they're the ones who are being charged when in fact they were the victims.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Obviously, that's what we're trying to do. It's really interesting for us to reflect that it was only in 1985 that the law changed and a woman could charge her own partner with sexual assault. Before that her body was considered to belong to her legal partner whether or not they were living together, so we have changed to the extent that we've changed our Criminal Code and we are seeing charges come forward. We're seeing successful charges come forward.

The problem in all of these instances is that in order to establish beyond a reasonable doubt the guilt of an accused, there very often is no witness who can corroborate the testimony of the victim. There may or may not be any forensic evidence. Our biggest problem I think with police investigations is that they have not tended to investigate these cases sometimes as vigorously as they would if it were a stranger assault, assuming that the evidence is not necessarily conclusive of sexual assault and that sort of thing.

We have got victim/witness programs now in 12 locations in Ontario. Our objective is to have those available in every court location, because we find that



that support for women as they go through the process is very important, and it acts as a support not only for the women but for the prosecution of the case, because obviously it is there to try to ensure that there is a balance between the rights of the accused and the rights of the victim in the case.

**1740**

So we're beginning to make those changes, but I think we would be very foolish not to be very clear that there is still a real stigma attached to laying a charge of sexual assault, that in spite of all the efforts around a rape shield in the Criminal Code, the behaviour of the victim often becomes the focus of a trial. There is real concern that her psychological wellbeing will in fact suffer as a result of going through that. With the best will in the world, friends, family, even police officers may say to somebody: "You're not likely to get any more of a sentence with the physical assault than you would with the two charges together. Why don't you just go with the physical assault and you may not have to go through that humiliation?"

We would hope that wouldn't be the case, because part of the issue is that we have to get across to a perpetrator population that this is a crime and it's against the law and that we, all of us here as a community, do not approve of that and we are prepared to bring the full weight of the law to bear against people who sexually assault. So it's in our best interests to try and encourage people to go through that and for us to try to humanize the system and give strength to the complainant.

**The Chair:** Ms Poole, if you wouldn't mind finishing the last 20 minutes—I'm advised we may not have a vote in the House today. Hopefully we will not be interrupted and can take the committee till 6 o'clock.

**Ms Poole:** Okay. I am certainly prepared to do that, Mr Chair.

Just to continue on the Ontario women's directorate grants, there were a couple of others that I was puzzled about that I'd like to bring up at this time.

There was a grant to the United Tenants of Ontario for UTOO's 1993 annual meeting and training conference. As Housing critic for the Liberal caucus for two and a half years, I never found that tenants' conferences were gender-specific, although certainly there are specific housing needs that women have, particularly those who are poor and vulnerable. I was just quite puzzled why \$5,000 would have been given, not by the Ministry of Housing, which I could understand, but by the Ontario women's directorate to the United Tenants of Ontario.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I'm trying to find the sheet and can't find it, but my recollection of that would be that since the vast majority of women who live in social housing are women who may be single parents or may

be on their own and these are highly overrepresented among the kind of landlord-tenant advocacy case load the United Tenants would get, that would not be a strange kind of thing.

I'm glad somebody can give me the exact issue here. Yes. It was a subsidy specifically for women to attend that meeting. It was to ensure that women who didn't have the wherewithal to travel to that meeting, to deal with child care and so on, could go and be trained as tenant advocates by the group. All of the grants would have gone to women to enable them to take that training and to attend that conference.

**Ms Poole:** I find that a bit more tenuous than the other ones where to be there was a logical conclusion as to why the Ontario women's directorate would give the grant as opposed to another ministry.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Well, we didn't, because what we found was that in the normal course of things, as is true in many of the advocacy groups, those who have the confidence and the wherewithal tend to take advantage of these opportunities and those who don't, don't. We also in that grant funded a workshop that was for women only regarding safety, harassment and violence issues within a housing situation to ensure that the women were particularly aware of the kinds of particular advocacy women require.

I would disagree with you in the sense that it's a grant that would address all the target groups: It would be all ages, all races of women in our society and particularly women with disabilities, who very often are most vulnerable in those situations and would be meeting both our objectives in terms of countering violence and our objectives in terms of building women's self-esteem and enabling them to advocate on their own behalf.

**Ms Poole:** Those are certainly worthy objectives, but I would submit to you that many of the other grants, in fact the vast majority of the other grants that have been given out by the Ontario women's directorate, are specifically for programs that relate to women or to remove systemic barriers. I would just be somewhat surprised at that particular one.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** At \$5,000, if we enable women to learn how to advocate on their own behalf in a housing situation and to work with other women to help them be safer, then that's a perfectly appropriate use of grants.

**Ms Poole:** Just one final comment, because I'm like my dog at home: I always like the last word. I'll get that last woof in.

**Mrs Haslam:** But you're much better-looking.

**Ms Poole:** Woof, woof. But you haven't seen my dog.

As Housing critic I dealt with many tenants' groups and I found that women were very representative in the tenants' movement, that they were articulate, that the

tenants' movement itself has advanced to such a state that women were trained to do it within the movement. I guess I just see so many needs in other areas where women have not had that momentum to self-esteem and to represent groups at large that that's one I would have thought the tenants' movement itself had taken care of.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** But we wouldn't want only those tenants who have the money to travel to go.

**Ms Poole:** No, you can't have the last woof. Minister, this will go on for years if you don't let me have the last woof.

Okay, one more woof. This was a different one, and again, it's not that I disagree with the intent of the project; I just wasn't sure why it would fit under the OWD. There is a project by the 2-Spirited People of The 1st Nations called Youth Drug Prevention Project II. I don't have the details of this particular project but I would suspect from what I have read in the past that the drug problem is particularly rampant among the youth in the first nations, not solely among the young males but predominantly young males. So I was wondering why this would have been covered by the Ontario women's directorate as opposed to being something that Comsoc or even Health might have funded.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Well, people are looking for the actual details on it. I can tell you what I imagine. I imagine that, like most other drug and addiction programs, the needs of women may not have been met in the same degree. It would probably be a situation where a particular program was designed by women for women within the spiritual context of a maternal society to try and build a better way of dealing with things. They're getting me the sheet and I'll let you know. Here it comes, so we might as well just do it and get it. It was actually 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations. This project was directed toward gay and lesbian aboriginal youth to address issues of sexual and physical substance abuse.

**Ms Poole:** Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

I would like to bring up one, more generic, problem. I really don't know how widespread this is, but I've had in the last couple of years complaints from a couple of sources about Ontario women's directorate grants, about the process: that people would spend a great deal of time and energy putting together a grant program, with a lot of encouragement from the directorate. These are cases where they have met the criteria and then, at the end of the day, they have had their grant application rejected.

1750

I don't know how widespread this is, but it would seem to me that there should be some process where there's elimination at the very beginning, not after these community groups have gone through an exhaustive process using very scarce resources and then had to

cancel a seminar they were planning to hold at the 11th hour because the money didn't come through. I wonder if you could comment on that.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Without knowing the particulars, my sense would be the same, that it would be desirable to avoid that. Whether that would happen because there was a sudden need to reduce our budget, because of a sudden budget issue, I can't answer. What I can tell you is that there have been complaints about our process from various parts of the community, and we are engaged right now in terms of looking at how the criteria are set, how our outreach into communities does operate.

We have an ongoing problem with some of our communities, particularly some of our cultural and immigrant and racial minority communities, particularly aboriginal communities, that because they do not tend to view gender issues outside of the holistic concept of their own communities, very often they have been ineligible in the past because of our focus just on "by women, for women." We're obviously trying to broaden that in terms of realizing that where communities are more comfortable in dealing with these issues in a more holistic way, we need to be finding ways to encourage them, without defocusing from the very real gender base of most of the problems we have.

Our problem as a directorate is that we were specifically set up to advocate on behalf of women. We are very well aware that the issues that women have often involve issues that affect their children, that affect their partners, that affect their seniors and so on. Our issue at this point in time is, how do we meet those needs and still maintain a focus on gender issues, which no one else does and no one else is mandated to do specifically within government; in fact, are often mandated to ensure they're not providing things in a focused way to one gender or another.

**Mr Hayes:** Now the last word: Say thank you.

**Ms Poole:** No, I've got another issue. Just to have the last woof on that one, the specific case—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Could I just say that in that grant process we'll be doing some consultations and we would be very happy to hear from you some of the community responses you've heard and other members of the community have heard. We're very anxious to try to have a broad spectrum, as part of that program review, of where the concerns lie and how we can meet some of those concerns.

**Ms Poole:** I will tell you that one of the instances was one of the women's centres. They had actually shown me the proposal after it was rejected, and it did seem to me to meet the criteria. It was quite embarrassing for them, because they had to call off the seminar they were hosting. I didn't know how widespread this was, but it's certainly something we would like to see.



**Hon Mrs Boyd:** The other issue, though, that you need to know is that the demand is much higher than we can fill. For example, the base allocation last year was \$749,200; we actually ended up with many fewer dollars and have only been able to commit, so far, \$229,000, so people do get turned down.

**Ms Poole:** And I can certainly understand that. What I would like to see happen is to have some sort of mechanism at the beginning of the proposal to evaluate the chances rather than having them go all the way through and then finding indeed that there's no money at the end of the rainbow.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We don't always know, of course.

**Ms Poole:** I assume I have time to continue.

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

**Ms Poole:** I had asked last Wednesday what proportion of crown attorneys have received training on violence against women.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I believe that's in the answers we provided for you.

**Ms Poole:** That's right. This was in response to my concern about the expenditure control plan and cost reductions in the violence against women initiatives. I had asked you specifically about a reduction that actually crosses both of your ministerial portfolios as the Attorney General and also as minister for women's issues: reduced funding for the training of crown attorneys on issues relating to sexual assault and wife assault.

I wish I had Hansard available with me at this moment to give me your exact response, but to paraphrase, I believe it was that you didn't need as much money in the program because many of the crown attorneys had in fact been trained. I had hoped for numbers of crown attorneys as well as numbers of crown attorneys who had been trained, because the answer given to me doesn't really lead me to believe that, because most of the crown attorneys have actually been trained and because there's very little turnover, we can rest assured that they've all been trained.

This says at least one crown attorney in each of the 54 crown attorney offices in Ontario is designated the coordinator. These crown attorneys receive very specialized and extensive training. I understand, on the relevant legal, psychological and social issues relating to these offences; they serve as the resource person. It goes on to say that all the other crown attorneys get little courses, mini-courses, and are required to at least attend a three-day intensive training session. But I get the impression from this that very few crown attorneys would actually have the full course. They say at least one in each of the 54 offices but—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** All get the three-day intensive course, and that includes specialized training in the area of abuse against women. What we used to do was to provide separately for sexual assault training and wife

assault training. As part of the integration move this year, and I was one of the participants in the conference, we put together those two issues to show the continuum of violence against women. That's one of the things we're doing: Instead of offering two separate courses, we're doing it together to say that the skills, the sensitivity to the victims' needs, the legal considerations in terms of proof and in terms of how you handle an adverse witness and so on, all of those things, apply to both of the situations.

The designated crowns are on a rotating basis, because we find people get burned out in this field. In an office, say, of 12 crowns, since we've been doing this training since 1984-85 in this province, you would probably have over the number of years most of those people having shared in a designation as either a wife assault or a sexual assault designee and having got specialized training.

There is turnover, obviously, and in the past the turnover's been much higher than it is now. I didn't say "most of" the approximately 500 crown attorneys—there are 489 or something—but that the majority of them at this point have been trained. I can't give you exact numbers, but we can certainly see if we can come up with something that's a bit more exact in terms of some of the training.

The specialist designee is expected to be there as a resource person; the cases are talked about if there are real difficulties and so on. Where there's a victim/witness coordinator or where there's a decision by the designee that we need to send in someone who's experienced in terms of victim/witness services, then that kind of resource is also available.

**Ms Poole:** Hand in hand with training our crown attorneys in dealing with these very sensitive cases is also the matter of how we're dealing with the rest of the judicial system, particularly judges. The Chair is giving me the high sign—the Speaker is leaving his throne in the Legislature—but I wonder if you could very briefly begin the discussion of what you as Attorney General are doing to ensure our judges have training.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I'm afraid there's no way I could possibly be brief about that, so I wonder if we could put that off until tomorrow.

**The Chair:** That would certainly get concurrence from the Chair, as he recognizes that it is 6 of the clock and I'm on my way to the Board of Internal Economy to get our budget approved.

This meeting stands adjourned until tomorrow immediately following routine proceedings. We have about two hours and 47 minutes remaining to complete the estimates for the Office Responsible for Women's Issues. This meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1800.



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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

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Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

\*Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Haslam, Karen (Perth ND) for Mr Bisson and Ms Haeck

Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L) for Mr Elston

Witmer, Elizabeth (Waterloo North/-Nord PC) for Mr Carr

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 20 October 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 20 octobre 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Office responsible for women's issues

Office de la Condition féminine



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 20 October 1993

The committee met at 1537 in committee room 2.

## OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We've reconvened to complete approximately two hours and 47 minutes remaining for the office responsible for women's issues. By agreement, we will complete our estimates of this office today, barring any unforeseen problems that may call us to the House, but we're not anticipating them. So at this point I think there's consensus that we'll use the balance of today to complete this estimate.

I believe Ms Poole last had the floor, and I will recognize Ms Witmer in a moment, but I believe you and your staff have some of the responses that came out of questioning yesterday.

**Hon Marion Boyd (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues):** We do indeed. We've tabled with the clerk, and I understand copies are being made now, the following records that respond to the questions asked: first, the draft North American Free Trade Agreement Implications for Women paper that the Ontario women's directorate had done; second, a descriptive note on the Ministry of Education violence prevention secretariat; next, a list of the current OWD projects for girls and young women, particularly in terms of prevention of violence; the OWD education and training equity unit publications list, because again that includes some of the resource materials that have been done; a list of the audio-visual materials that have been selected for education and training equity; some information regarding the grant to the Kingston Area School to Employment Council which was requested; also, a detailed note around grant funding on the teen violence prevention program.

We've also tabled additional information on what proportion of crown attorneys have received training on violence against women issues and the information that the Ministry of Community and Social Services was able to prepare regarding child care centre closures.

I would say that the very detailed information that Ms Witmer requested regarding child care yesterday was indeed the updated request that was given to MCSS last year in its estimates. They indicated at that time that the amount of dollars to redefine their data in that format would be extraordinarily expensive and declined to answer in that format at that time and continue to do so. So that will be available.

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Waterloo North):** I have a letter here that was written to Mr Harris. It comes from the Simcoe Hall Settlement House in Oshawa and it reads as follows:

"We are writing to you in regard to a situation that has caused a great deal of distress here at Simcoe Hall Settlement House. Three years ago, a young woman"—and I won't name her—"came to our women's resource centre for help. She had left North Bay with her three-

year-old child to escape the child's father because of an abusive family situation.

"A year and a half later, she returned to North Bay for a visit with her parents. Her husband had visiting rights. The young girl was left with him. When the child returned, there was evidence that she had been sexually assaulted. Pat took her daughter to the Oshawa General Hospital, who confirmed that this was indeed the case. However, this was not enough for the authorities in North Bay. They required that the child be re-examined in North Bay before a police officer. This was done and the father was charged and later served a six-month prison sentence.

"Two Christmases ago, she was ordered to bring the child to North Bay in order that the father could visit with her over the holidays. She refused and was served with a contempt-of-court order. She went into hiding and emerged in the new year to find that the husband had dropped the charges on the understanding that he could see the child on a regular basis.

"In the meantime, Pat and her daughter were building up a new life here in Oshawa. She returned to college and was due to begin the fall semester next week. Now she has been told to pack her bags and bring the child to North Bay so that the convicted husband can have his visiting rights resumed.

"The judge in this case has shown no consideration for the little girl. The visits will be conducted in the presence of a 24-hour third party, which indicates that there is indeed a threat to the child.

"Once again, we see how the offender takes priority in our legal system over the victim. On behalf of the mother and her child, we ask for your help."

What type of advice do you have for people like this? I know this is not an isolated case because I've had at least two women approach my office within the last year who have actually fled in order to escape an opportunity for the child to visit with the father, in this case because the mother did suspect sexual abuse, and unfortunately nobody was listening to the individual. What are we doing? Because these are not isolated incidents.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** There are a number of things that are being done. First of all, judges are required indeed in their judgement to judge based on what is in the best interests of the child. Where there are allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse or even emotional abuse, which obviously suggests that it might not be in the best interests of the child, we're in the same situation that we are whenever accusations are levelled and have not yet been proven. It's a very, very difficult situation for family court judges and one which I think causes them an enormous amount of distress in their work. They often talk about it as one of those very difficult issues that they have to deal with.

Even where there hasn't been a criminal charge laid or

proved, many judges do what the judge in this case apparently did and say that since we know—generally speaking, it's agreed by those who care for children that children also have a right to have access to both parents, that there can be later problems that arise when children are denied that access. They romanticize about what the parent would be like. All of our children find it difficult to get along with whomever they're residing with at any point in time and they may imagine themselves escaping to the heaven that's provided by the other parent, only to flee into real danger. We see that happen.

In this case it appears that, recognizing that, the judge has said it's important for this child to have access to her parent but it's not safe for her to do that alone, and therefore has ordered that the access be only within the context of supervised access for 24 hours. That, quite frankly, is what we would like to see, rather than just two-hour visits. It really gives a child the knowledge of what it is like to live with a person, which tends to cut down some of that romanticizing when it's someone who needs power and control, and usually people who are sexual abusers are people who need to exercise power and control over others.

Supervised access, we think, is the better route to go. We have only got the resources to provide a number of projects, which are scattered across the province. We're looking at the results of those, listening to victims' groups, to those who are advocates on behalf of children, to all of the players in the violence-against-women field to see how this is working. Frankly, the results are different, depending on the design of the program and the convenience to the parent, the cost of the program, because there are fees for some.

There are some private programs that are being developed, because many parents who do have the resources would prefer the convenience of having a private program. I know in my own city a group of people have started a private supervised access program.

Many people who are frightened for their children think that the solution is to isolate that child totally from the person whom they believe is abusing them. We really believe quite strongly that if we can find other ways to keep those children safe, where the abusive parent doesn't become a mysterious and sometimes romantic figure, it's safer for the children in the long run, if they're very young.

As children get older, increasingly the courts are beginning to listen to the choice of the child, and we find that when they're, I would say, anywhere from maybe 8 to 10, depending on the particular circumstances, their views are very much listened to by the court. Certainly if they have access to the official guardian and have their own legal counsel, very often they're represented in these hearings and their best interests are protected by their own legal counsel. So there are a number of things we're trying to do.

The frustrating part of it is that very often we suspect very strongly that there's some abuse; it can't be proven. In a society that believes people are innocent until they're proven guilty, then children may be in danger of being victimized because we cannot prove beyond a reasonable

doubt that something has occurred.

**Mrs Witmer:** I know we do have a safe, neutral place in our own community for visiting, and it seems to be quite successful. Obviously that's not available throughout the province, so that's an area I do believe we need to take a look at, because I would agree with you, Minister. I think children should have the opportunity to communicate and bond with both the male and female parent if it's at all possible.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Yes. Some churches, I know, are setting up those programs on behalf of their parishioners, where a disinterested third party will accompany the child and be there. Sometimes exchanges of children, where there's a possibility of conflict during the exchange period, will be set up by community groups. I think particularly of churches because one of my own family members is involved as a supervisor in a church program. I think increasingly there's a recognition on the part of communities that this is a way in which we can help people.

Judges will accept a supervisor who is a friend of the family or a family member when they are able to describe very clearly what the responsibility is. Under the Child and Family Services Act, what they try to impress upon those people is that they're in the role of a caretaker for the child and therefore are particularly liable if anything happens to the child in their care. It's not quite as iffy as it sounds to make that kind of an assignment.

It's really up to the custodial parent and to the child, however, and always unfortunately is, to say how that's working and whether in fact the security is being provided.

1550

**Mrs Witmer:** Ours is in a church. The churches, I think, in all of our communities are certainly assuming some of the responsibilities they didn't have before in recognition of the fact they need to assume responsibility for the social issues.

I've had an opportunity to communicate with some of the people who are involved in providing shelter to women and children who have been living in an abusive situation. The one concern I'm hearing from them now is interesting because it's shifted: They are recognizing that money is no longer the number one concern. The number one concern appears to still be—and I know you responded to us already—about the justice system, the lack of sensitivity.

As I say, you've given us a response and you've told us how the crown attorneys do receive training on violence, but from all that I'm hearing, women still hesitate and would sooner make custody arrangements outside of the justice system, which can sometimes be dangerous too and not in their best interests. They're still not feeling comfortable. I want you to be aware of that, because I think it is important that these women still are feeling quite powerless and are not comfortable.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I think that's right. One of the things we do at the directorate is that we're part of the federal-provincial territorial group that is looking at the custody and access issues from the point of view of trying to



resolve those issues in a less adversarial way. Very often, I think what distresses people is that even where there are real issues in dispute, the temptation to have children as pawns in that dispute is very great, unless everyone concerned—all the lawyers concerned, the judges concerned, the social workers—is really aware that the children are very fragile in this situation and often blame themselves for the conflict between their parents. They may be the last point of dispute, which is one of those issues. That's part of the reason they get the impression that they're the reason everything's falling apart, because they may be the last thing the parents are willing to talk about.

The other thing we're trying to do in the justice system is to look at that adversarial nature and see if there aren't better ways of alternative dispute resolution. I was in Kingston on Friday visiting the mediation service in the family court there. The family court in Kingston has had a mediation service for a very long time. There are ways in which you can defuse some of these situations and actually get some resolution to some of the situations prior to going into court. That often makes it easier.

**Mrs Witmer:** Yesterday I didn't have an opportunity to ask questions around children's health and I would like to. This is an issue I'm quite concerned about, particularly when I discovered yesterday, in reading my paper at home in Kitchener-Waterloo, that suicide is now the leading cause of death after accidents for people under 35 and that here in Canada we have the dubious distinction of having the third-highest suicide rate in the world for young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

We know this is a problem that's increasing. I'm sure every one of us in this room is aware of teenagers—I know my son has undergone a few times where both males and females have taken their own life. I think it is a serious problem. I mentioned yesterday that there is a lack of mental health treatment available. In fact, in the paper yesterday as well it says, "For the first time in its 17-year history, the Cambridge Community Mental Health Clinic is turning patients away." There's a 60% increase from the same time period two years ago and in June they decided to stop accepting children's cases, except in emergencies, until the end of September, and 150 families were turned away. Now they are treating some kids with suicidal, homicidal and seriously ill—but the others are just not getting help. They're also not dealing with people with marital problems, which, again, has an impact on the mental health of the children.

My questions are: How many children are waiting for mental health services? What action is being taken to ensure that these children do have access to mental health services in the future? Also, on the recommendations that were recommended following the standing committee on social development's Report on Children's Mental Health Services in Ontario in 1991, I'd like to know how many of those recommendations have actually been implemented and also what date they were implemented. As I say, I know that the provision of children's mental health services remains a major problem.

In many ways it relates to all of the other problems we're talking about today. We need to do something

about providing timely access to services and relieving the burden on the schools and on the parents. I can tell you that I personally have been contacted by so many parents who just are beside themselves because there's no help for their kids anywhere. The system's just not dealing with them. I don't know if you have any further comments.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We'll certainly do what we can to get you those figures. I must say that, having worked with children's services, one of the things you know from a field worker's point of view is that parents are so desperate that they put their children on every list possible. So the lists often are considerably longer than might actually pan out if we could get the primary services for all the children.

My understanding is that the children's mental health centres don't automatically collect the waiting lists in a way that enables you to merge the lists and make sure you don't have duplications. The last year they did conduct a survey of the agencies, and that was 71 of their agencies, was 1989-90. My note tells me that at that point there were 6,847 children waiting for service. The caution on that from the association itself is that there's no control there for duplication of names and no control versus those who have been assessed as actually needing mental health services and those who have been unassessed.

That's an important issue, because one of the things that discourages me is that we seem to spend an inordinate amount of our resources assessing children. We assess many children in the school system, but in order to get admission to a children's mental health program they may need to be assessed again. If they don't fit that program, they may get assessed again. I have talked to parents many times where children have been assessed five and six times and never received one iota of treatment. That is the kind of duplication I think we have to avoid, and the only way we can do that is if we begin to integrate the children's services in a way that has some common protocols about how we deal with them. Certainly that is the recommendation that has come forward from the Sparrow Lake group. It is an effort that, when I was Minister of Community and Social Services, we tried to tackle through the interministerial committee, and I understand those efforts are still going on.

It is really a very difficult sort of situation. We don't know how many of the children who are seen and assessed need supports within their environment, as opposed to mental health services; we suspect many. The depression issues for young children may be specifically around feeling unsupported, alone and alienated in their situation. We're not sure how many of the children need direct services for sexual abuse, but we suspect a good many of them do. Our children's aid societies tell us that.

We don't know how many of the children have other problems that may look like mental health problems but may not be: chemical imbalances of one form or another, poor nutrition, that sort of thing. Those are all things we have to find out. Some of them we can prevent and some of them we can't. Early contact, early assessment, early work with kids and early supports throughout the system



are the important ways to tackle the problem.

**Mrs Witmer:** I would agree with you and I really personally believe very strongly that we can't afford to wait any longer. We really need to take some action. It's a very serious problem. You have only to take a look at the increasing violence in the schools.

1600

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I agree.

**The Chair:** Ms Witmer, thank you. Perhaps in the next rotation I'll have a question around the question you raised earlier with respect to support payment enforcement which I might take the opportunity to raise, but at this point in the rotation I'd like to recognize Ms Haslam.

**Mrs Karen Haslam (Perth):** I was taking notes yesterday when Ms Witmer was talking about women in the private sector versus women in the public sector and why tax dollars were only going into an expansion of the public sector. Am I correct in thinking that the women in the private sector, whether it's day care or health care, are not paid as well and that therefore some of the money going into the public sector area goes to better benefits and pay for the women in that sector?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I think we should acknowledge right off the top the very serious problem that's always been there for pay scales for women in child care, period. It is one of those areas where the pay equity issue is probably more blatantly obvious than anywhere else. That's why we have done very specific work as a government to try and raise that pay.

It certainly is true that on average, in many of the surveys that have been done, women working in the private sector have tended to have lower wages and lower benefits. That doesn't mean that's true in each specific case, because there are certainly many exceptions to that where private sector centres have provided exemplary working conditions for their staffs, but on average that tends to be the case. That's not surprising, because there also seems to be a larger number of people who work on a part-time basis. We know that part-time workers are seldom eligible for the same benefits, if benefits are available at all, and that of course their average wages per year would be lower.

So the comparison on a basis of hour to hour may not work out if we make assumptions about whether or not it's part-time. It is certainly true that the private sector is quite unlikely to be unionized and therefore not have the collective bargaining power that tends to increase wages and benefits and improve working conditions.

All of those things may very well impact those workers as well. It would be my hope that as people leave the private sector, if in fact private sector centres do close and move into the public sector to offer the services they're offering, they might see an improvement, because if that profit factor is not there and every dollar goes back into paying for improved programs, some of those dollars will go to the employees, some of them will go to improve program equipment and that sort of thing as well, but one would assume some of them would go directly to employees.

**Mrs Haslam:** There were a couple of other items I

wanted to cover today. Number one, I'd like to talk about programs that are funded for men. In particular, I remember a gentleman and his wife coming into my constituency office concerned about a program he was in that was offering counselling for him. He said: "You know, it's like the steam in a tea kettle. I have counselling. I'm able to control my anger. The violence has gone down." The wife sat beside him and said: "This is the best way to work out this difficulty we're facing. The program is successful." But it was not being covered because of some cuts and the counselling services were not going to be there.

Are there programs for men funded under the Ontario women's directorate, and do you look at those programs as a certain percentage or are they more on an ad hoc basis? I would hate to see them not looked at simply because they deal with counselling men. I would hope that we're looking at the programs as benefits to women also.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Some of that \$16 million that flows through the women's directorate to other ministries does fund some counselling programs for men, either through MCSS or through corrections, sometimes a combination of both and sometimes in conjunction with the United Way in a particular area or another kind of foundation. There is a list of programs that we're aware of and so on, and we'd be happy to provide you with the list.

The community counselling line in the Ministry of Community and Social Services budget, its base budget, is \$10.652 million. That includes the men's programs. It also includes things like family service associations that provide in some cases individual counselling or group counselling to men alone or to women alone and sometimes couple counselling. My own family service association in London has offered a group couple counselling program in the past. I'm not sure that they're still offering it.

There are real concerns about the programs. There are claims on both sides, that they're successful, that they're not successful. We did a major examination of this through a symposium last year bringing together those offering the programs as well as those who do advocacy and counselling work with women, those who work in the mental health areas, the corrections areas and so on and really looked at some of the issues.

The women's community is very concerned because there's a complete lack of consistency around how accountable those programs are for the safety of the women who have survived violence with these men. Some of the women are living with their partners, some of them are separated, and there's a real sense that there isn't a consistent way in which we can measure the actions that are taken to ensure safety for the women when the men are in those situations.

When you talk about the steam in the kettle, you're right, except that if a man is in a program that is really helping him to control his anger and to really examine his feelings and to begin to change, he may stop being physically violent to his partner. She may then feel, "Okay, now it's my turn to express my view," and you may find people out of sync in another way and interact-

ing unhealthily in another way. I certainly had clients who described that, that when the physical violence ended they thought, "Now I can start to express myself," and what it did was escalate the pressures between the couple.

Where couples are separated, very often the violence doesn't end. People make a mistake of thinking it does. Men often make the excuse, "I'm in a program, and therefore it's time you came back to me," or "I'm doing my thing. Why aren't you doing the same thing?" It can be very difficult.

What the upshot has been is that there is frankly a lot of controversy around the programs.

**Mrs Haslam:** Would it be safe to say that women in general would take the position, "I'd rather see the money in a women's program"?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Women who work as advocates would say that. The women themselves, from my own experience with my own clients, most of the women I worked with, whether or not they were living with their partners, wanted to have their partner stop his violence and learn different behaviour. They were always afraid that he might not be violent to them if he wasn't living with them, but he may be violent to somebody else. So my experience with women is, whether or not they want to live with that man ever again, they would like to see him get a chance to improve.

**Mrs Haslam:** So any funding through the OWD would be through some sort of pass-through into another agency, or are there some programs offered by the women's directorate?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** There are none offered directly by the women's directorate. There are men batterers programs through corrections. There's a little over \$800,000 that's funnelled through the dollars that come through us.

The paper that has been prepared from this symposium will be available, I would think fairly shortly, and what we then have to do is try and get a consensus within the community as to what those guidelines and that accountability framework might be like before we can begin to fund any more programs. We're not expanding the funding in that area until that kind of accountability is there.

**Mrs Haslam:** How much time do I have?

**The Chair:** Another 10 minutes.

**Mrs Haslam:** And there's another round?

**The Chair:** There will be two more.

1610

**Mrs Haslam:** Okay, good. Then I'll go on with another one of my questions while I have a chance. This also leads into an anecdotal situation that I want to share with you, but along the idea of where the women's movement is around some of these programs and around their feeling about some of these programs.

There was a breakfast in the north for some 700 women and a few men, put on by LEAF, I believe, and one of the organizers was asked if they would announce that there was an upcoming meeting coming into that area of the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

There was some partisan politics involved, which I'm not going to get into, but the point was that it wasn't announced. Here were 700 women at a breakfast meeting who could have been informed of the Ontario advisory council's upcoming meeting: "Let's support them, let's get out and meet them," and so on and so forth.

How can the ministry increase its efforts to have that network, the network of women out there, become more connected and more supportive? Because I think it should have been, "We are women in this together," not looking at other aspects.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Yes, I would agree with you; it's disappointing when that happens. I think we always have expectations that because we as women have many things in common, we have everything in common, and of course that's not true.

Whatever the partisan aspects of it would be, the Ontario advisory council is not a government organization. It is in fact an arm's-length advisory council, and the revised form of it is in fact to try and reinforce those kinds of networks. That's why there is regional representation and why regional meetings are what they are holding, and having part of those meetings open to the general public. This is the first one that has been held in the north. I think it's the one in Sudbury that you must be talking about, because it takes place tomorrow night, the open part of the meeting. The council is meeting today, tomorrow and Friday.

It was a real disappointment, I'm sure, if that couldn't be announced to a group of people who should be the natural constituency of the Ontario advisory council, and I'm hoping that we'll be able to influence those who share the common goals of improving the equity and status of women as time goes on.

The council has not always been seen as a progressive force by some people. Certainly the criticisms that we heard in the consultation we went through in 1991 to really look at the council and to look at the sunset provisions in the OIC indicated that many people felt it was a Toronto group that was removed from their interests and didn't really represent them. We've reformed the group, but many people still have those same old feelings, so it is going to take us some time to build with the council a better sense of rapport with its new mandate.

**Mrs Haslam:** I look forward to that because I think this was a very sad commentary on women in general, that we couldn't join together in support of other women and in particular an advisory council. I have a few more questions, but I know my colleague here has some and I'll save these for the next one.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** My first question has to do with women in banking, and I'll start it off by saying that the banking institutions in this country are absolutely horrific. They're not just horrific to women, although they are worse, but they are horrific in terms of what they are doing to the business community as a whole and what they're doing in terms of driving bankruptcies up in a needless way.

But what I would like is if you could perhaps comment



on whether there have been any changes in terms of the type of attitude that women have experienced trying to go to the bank and keeping a loan that could not be cosigned by a male somewhere, or whatever. I think, in terms of starting a business, in terms of being independent, in terms of having an identity and a career and all of these kinds of things, that kind of attitude towards women is a real roadblock.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I agree with you, and I think when we get our Advisory Panel of Women in Business and Industry on Economic Renewal together, credit is always one of the issues that's at the top of its list to consider.

One of our members is a member of the bankers' association and in fact last time had some suggestions about what some of the problems are. It isn't just an issue of collateral. One of the issues she raised was the difficulty and the lack of resources that women seem to have to formulate good, strong business plans, business plans that look familiar because they're modelled on the traditional model of a business plan.

We certainly problem-solved around the kinds of resources the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade has that we certainly assist in helping them develop and deliver, how that could support that. We recognize that as part of really encouraging women we have to revitalize that whole area.

We did for many years offer that kind of assistance to women. Gradually it became generic in its nature, and as it became generic, fewer and fewer women participated. So we know that whatever the psychological factor is, when it's generic women don't seem to participate to the same extent, and we need to be mindful of that.

In terms of the actual availability of credit, I think the community economic development program that our government is putting into place will provide a lot of the very small seed money that's needed for a lot of the enterprises that women begin. Many women start their businesses in a very small way and are content to build at the rate that they can do that, partly, I think, because they often don't have the capacity to work 25 hours a day, seven days a week if they also have family responsibilities. They tend to start modestly and build, and often build very substantially.

When we talk about risk factors, women are, as the statistical evidence shows, less of a risk, because in fact more small businesses started by women succeed and are still successful a number of years later or else are sold as successful businesses. That speaks to the ability of women to do that. Part of our job is to really ensure that the investment industry begins to understand the job-creating capacity of women entrepreneurs, because they have a great job-creating capacity. They often create businesses that are particularly conducive to the hiring and the employing of women in ways that fit their own particular lifestyle needs.

**Mr Wiseman:** On page 11 of this rather thick document that you gave us today in response to my questions yesterday about the free trade deal, it states in the bottom paragraph:

"During the FTA negotiations, Prime Minister Mul-

rooney promised 'the best adjustment programs in the world.' Since then, no new help has been forthcoming. Indeed, 'the federal government has reduced spending on women's training by more than \$200 million or nearly 30% in the years since the FTA went into effect.'"

Then the next paragraph, to me, is somewhat disconcerting:

"While overall federal funding of training has increased, the federal government has decreased funding from federal tax revenue sources (consolidated revenue fund)."

Clearly, if money is going up, and the money for women has gone down 30%, what kind of impact is this going to have?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Sure, because they've pressed the program into the UI scheme and many women, because of their work patterns and so on, are less eligible than they've been. There's also been an absolute unwillingness to fund some of the programs that have been very successful in this province for training specifically immigrant women.

Again, it's this thrust towards generic programming that has created some of the difficulties of people saying: "We have a lot of jobless. They're both men and women. They both ought to be able to access these funds." The problem is that women who may not have had the same experience in the workforce, who may not have had the same training and, as we all have commented, may not have the same self-confidence and the same ability to protect themselves from harassment, may need greater supports in order to become trained and to become effective workers within a particular field.

We have seen very good agencies across this province that have had their federal funding withdrawn and are no longer able to offer programs that they had been offering in some cases for up to 15 years and that had a marvelous success rate in terms of getting women back into the workforce or into the workforce for the first time, into jobs that they could retain and continue to be productive and self-sustaining members of our communities. It is a great shame, because those women no longer qualify because they have not been recipients of UI.

1620

**Mr Wiseman:** Do you have any numbers? Have you been able to track at all? I know it's still relatively early in the process, but my suspicion is that the UI changes are going to be discriminatory against women, and families in particular, where a spouse has been transferred—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Yes.

**Mr Wiseman:** I may be wrong in my assumption on this, but I would assume that upper management transfers would be more male-oriented at this point in time because of the overwhelming numbers of males in those areas. But if you have a woman in a job, if she has to quit that job to travel with her spouse, then she is being discriminated against by the UI changes. Do we have any numbers about what kind of impact that can have and how damaging that might be to the overall economy in terms of the male now saying, "I'm not going because



it's not to our economic advantage?"

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It seems to me that Pat and Hugh Armstrong, who have done a lot of work in terms of gender issues around employment, unemployment, part-time employment and so on, have gathered some figures. I can't remember whether I've seen them in a newspaper article or a small article; I'll try and find that for you. There's no question but that the facile manner in which the federal government has talked about the mobility of the workforce under free trade has impacted very severely on families. It's based on a notion that you still have the white-picket-fence family: the one partner working, the other one staying at home, usually the male working and the partner staying at home.

The complexity, and we're experiencing this in government with the relocations, where you have two partners working in a family and you have children, very often teenage children who have jobs as well, to just pick up and move becomes a very difficult issue.

We could probably find out for you from Management Board secretariat in our own relocation plans whether there's a differential in terms of men and women accepting jobs in that relocation—I think that would be an interesting thing for us to look at and I'd certainly be prepared to try and get that—and what the salary factors are. Is it the higher-paid person who is accepting the job? Normally, it would be. Families can't take a chance, if they're reliant on two incomes and they have to move, that they wouldn't accept the greatest security they can have. I think that's something we're seeing in the manufacturing area.

Hydro is another place. We might be able to get some information from them because of the migration that happened from Pickering to Bruce to Darlington in terms of what happens with that, whether in fact that similar kind of thing has occurred. Families often break up because neither partner is willing to give up his or her career, and certainly members of provincial Parliament know how difficult it is to commute back and forth and try and maintain relationships. So it's not surprising that those stresses really impact on families.

**Mrs Yvonne O'Neill (Ottawa-Rideau):** I'm, as you know, just coming into this committee, Madam Minister. I do have my own committee responsibilities right now, although I'm very interested in what you've been doing and I've been reading the Hansard.

I wanted to start with the Grandview compensation package, if I could. I understand that the responsibilities do fall in your area as the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, and I understand there has been a designated person from the directorate to be the intermediary. It's now almost an anniversary date, October 22, as you know, when I brought my bill and it was all-party agreement that there were certain compensation packages that needed to be looked at. I wonder if you can bring us up to date on where you are with the compensation packages, with whatever training opportunities, the legal aid costs and the therapy. I think that the girls are very interested and certainly we in our party are very interested in where those negotiations are and what has been provided throughout the last year.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** The Grandview Survivors' Support Group, of course, is represented by counsel, Miss Susan Vella. She is in negotiations with Mr Tom Marshall of the Attorney General's ministry and with Diane Nannarone, who is the support person who originally came from the women's health bureau, I believe, and has been seconded to work with the group on not just the compensation package but any of the other issues that are arising for the women.

The interim measures, of course, are to compensate the women for counselling costs. There's been a protocol set up in terms of appropriate counselling, at their choice, and how to do that compensation. My understanding is that back compensation has been negotiated with some, not with others, and that's ongoing. Certainly, it's a clear understanding on our part that as the negotiations go on, issues come up and it's important for people who require and choose the support of counselling to have that as it goes on. That's an interim kind of measure.

The legal fees, I understand, for their counsel, at least half of those have already been paid out and there's a negotiation process and a bit of a process around accountability on the rest of those. There is a commitment, but because they need legal counsel, given the complexity of this issue, that is a matter that is certainly part of what we consider a responsible response to them.

There has been a lot of work on specific areas of an agreement. One of the major issues has been the whole area of definition. There are those among the group who believe that the very fact of ever having been assigned to the Galt girls' school, or whatever one wants to call it—Grandview; certainly Churchill House—ought to enable you to apply for compensation. That is not our view. We do agree that where there's been physical, sexual abuse, unwarranted cruel treatment, inappropriate treatment, we need to work that out. Those definitions have been worked on. I don't think there's final agreement yet, but certainly those who would be eligible, there are some eligibility requirements for the counselling program that are being worked out with the group.

I think that's important, because we found when we negotiated the agreement with the St John's-St Joseph's group, taxpayers were very concerned to be sure that eligibility was an issue that was clearly transparent, that people could not take advantage of a program if in fact their situation was not such as to warrant it. Certainly, we don't want to discredit this process any further by not being very clear. It's our sense that the survivors' group agrees; they would like to have very, very firm criteria that they also can count on because, as they reach out to other people who may not have come forward, they want to be sure that they can be very clear about what constitutes eligibility and what does not.

The actual parameters of what a compensation would be are still in negotiation. We don't have the luxury in this case, if one can call it that, of having a third party who is also liable. One of our concerns as the women's directorate is that given there is not a third party who might also be assessed liability and that it is a government responsibility, obviously we don't want to see the women disadvantaged by that. At the same time, we

clearly have a responsibility to try to use our resources as sensitively and as sensibly as we can.

We're still far apart in some areas: the negotiation around how to compensate for training, what the best way is to do that. What the eligibility would be for things other than tuition and books, which we certainly are prepared to compensate for, has not been agreed on.

The issue of the kind of ongoing treatment facility that might be available has not been resolved. There are some fairly strong views on the part of the survivors' group which we have concerns about and we're discussing with them. I understand that I will probably be meeting with them some time over the next month to talk about some of our concerns about the model they've put forward and to try to work on that issue a little bit.

1630

They have made it very clear that they don't want the same process that was in place for the men at St Joe's and St Joseph's—that is, going through an investigator and a criminal injuries compensation process. They prefer to have the situation done through a different kind of inquiry, probably led by a former judge or someone whom they agree they can trust to adjudicate appropriately. We're certainly looking at how that could most effectively be done and how we could have as little pressure on them as possible in terms of that process, because we all know that often revictimizes people when they have to go through a very detailed and very public kind of a situation. How much of the situation needs to be private hearings, how much of it could be done by affidavit, what kind of supporting issues to show substantial damages and so on, all of that we're trying to work through.

It's been a good process. I think it's long, but given that there are internal supports that are in place, we're hopeful that that will be useful for many of the women. The help line that's been set up certainly has acted as a bit of an outreach and a bit of an anchor to people, and I think the process in and of itself may in the long run provide some healing. It's been very difficult for women to trust a government agency after the kind of institutionalization they experienced. We try to be as sensitive to that as we can, on the other hand always recognizing that our responsibilities are responsibilities as an institution and there are going to be times when our interests are not the same.

**Mrs O'Neill:** Have you got any projection at all on the time frame? I know your intent was to have this negotiation completed.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It's very difficult with negotiations. There's give and take on both sides, and the delays certainly haven't all been ours. It is very difficult when you're acting on behalf of a group of people whose interests may not be identical to get any kind of consensus.

One of the things we do know in the agreement is that we're going to have to build in some flexibility. Everyone's case is not the same. There has been very, very different severity in terms of the allegations that have been made and the needs are very different. Some women

never received any form of education and training once they were assigned to Grandview and other women in fact have been quite self-reliant, have managed to get substantial education and training, and yet still feel that they're entitled, if they choose to get more, to go further. So we have to have a flexible plan that's going to meet the needs of a group of people who have one thing in common—they were in the same place at approximately the same time—but may not have a whole lot else in common except the experience they shared there.

**Mrs O'Neill:** Okay. I thank you for that. The police investigation is dragging on; at least it looks that way. Is the same complement of investigative officers there? Have there been any changes in the speed in which that aspect of this whole thing is happening?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I wish I could answer that. I can't. I will try, again, to get that answer for you from the Solicitor General's ministry and from the regional police. As you know, it's a joint force kind of thing.

I should tell you the Ministry of the Attorney General is also quite frustrated. Part of our issue around the release of the Grandview report obviously is that we would like the investigation over so that in fact this information can be made public and so that we can get on with the prosecutions.

We have assigned additional prosecutors. We have assigned a victim/witness coordinator. We are wanting to move ahead with this as a ministry. Yet at the same time we know the difficulties of a police investigation that stretches back into the past, where records may not have been very adequate in the first place. Certainly we know that our whole scheme of recordkeeping has improved over the last 10 years quite remarkably, because of charter rights and so on, compared to what it would have been in those days, and also the difficulty of finding people.

Many of the folks who probably can give us the best information about what went on there may in fact not be readily findable. We know that people change their names; they may have changed their identities. Very often people who have been in this kind of circumstance hide rather than come forward to be witnesses. That is a real problem, I think, in a retrospective kind of investigation. At the same time, I wish we could get on with it as well.

**Mrs O'Neill:** I agree with you on that. You said in the House yesterday that you had difficulty with one of the statements. Have you been able to get any explanation of that statement?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Yes, I have. It was, as I suspected, that what they were talking about was the obligation under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act—what they were talking about was not protecting the identity or the reputations of people in the sense of not being open about who was responsible for what, but the implication that someone who is mentioned is necessarily an accused.

There are, I understand, some problems about the way in which the report was written in the first place and that it is not always clear, when names are mentioned,



whether those people were the informants or were not the informants. There is some lack of clarity, and I understand that was the issue that was being raised. I have not seen the transcript. I've asked for that transcript to be made available to me, and I'll make it available to you.

**Mrs O'Neill:** I'm not going to ask any more questions on that area. As you know, you and I have a very fundamental disagreement about the suppression of the report. I guess this particular appeal will settle that one way or the other. I don't think there's much further to go.

If I could go to another area that is certainly of great interest to me, that is the child care area. I was very interested in listening to what you were saying, and I'm sorry to be somewhat poignant in my remarks, but when you were talking about encouraging women in small business, I had some trouble since I was at the meeting this morning where there were a lot of businesswomen who are not being encouraged. You know of whom I speak: the independent day care operators.

They are still feeling extremely threatened. They indicated that they have had a great deal of difficulty meeting with members of your government and certainly in having any member of the government, including parliamentary assistants, come to an event or speak on behalf of the government. In fact on the last three occasions when I've been present, the most we could get at any time was an assistant from some minister's office, maybe yours; I forget.

In any case, they placed written questions. They were very frustrated and wondering how they are going to have any accountability to them about what's going on, because many of your government policies at least appear to have, and in many cases definitely have had, a very pointed effect on what they can and cannot do.

So I place before you the questions on conversion that are uppermost in their minds and certainly in mine. It's been very difficult to get any figures about how the conversion process is going, other than I think through the social contract discussions and through the budget we were able to find out that there were certainly several millions spent last year and \$12 million-plus designated for this year. Yet we're hearing figures like 10, 12 conversions having actually finally been, what should I say, closed or having taken place.

I would really like to know what you can bring me up to date on and how that \$12 million is being spent and how the nine point whatever was spent last year.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** This was one of the questions that was asked yesterday and we did get an answer as of today. We were asked how many commercial operators or operations there are in the province, and as of June 30, there were 657 commercial licences issued in the province. The number of operators related to those 657 is actually 487. Many of these people own multiple sites.

The commercial operators in the province have submitted 162 letters of inquiry around conversion, and that represents 217 of those commercial operations. Of those letters of inquiry, 146 have been recommended for valuation, and that's about 191 of the licensed operations. The valuation firm has dealt with 76 of those operators to

date, and 38 of those operators have accepted the valuation amount for conversion. There are still 38 that are in the process of looking at the evaluation and that sort of thing. At September 30, 22 commercial operators had converted, representing 31 different licensed centres. So that was the number that had actually completed the conversion at that date.

**1640**

**Mrs O'Neill:** How does that tie in with the figures then?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We didn't ask that question. It wasn't asked yesterday.

**Mrs O'Neill:** That's a very expensive operation. I mean, it comes down to about half a million dollars each.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I suspect it doesn't in any way account for the whole amount of money that was available. Remember, the amount of money was available over a period of five years. We knew it would take us a while to get going and that there would come a time when there was a real bump. So we could see what has been sent. I think that question was asked in the MCSS—

**Mrs O'Neill:** I think it's a very important question because these conversions in some cases are less than voluntary. They see it as their only option.

I have one other question that ties very closely to that and involves a lot of the women who were present today. That is, what kind of guarantee of security of tenure and mobility of benefits are you building into any of these conversions? Is this a condition? These are vulnerable people, many of them very vulnerable under the social contract, and I just wonder what kind of condition you're building into the conversion.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Certainly, where employees are unionized, there are successor rights that are built into the labour laws and they would be seen under those kinds of rules.

The other issues: No, there isn't a mobility aspect, as there is under the social contract. That is a very separate and negotiated agreement, as you know, particularly in the community services sector. I would hope, however, that as long as people are qualified and as long as it is a true conversion—in other words, people are using the same premises in the same kind of situation—that there would be no reason for a new community board not to want to take advantage of the kind of expertise and experience that people represent.

If there are concerns about qualifications or if the employees themselves do not want to work under those circumstances—and that may be so; people do have their own belief structures and may not find that something that is conducive to their working conditions—I don't think we could certainly guarantee that they would be able to continue to work there.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. With the permission of my colleague, I just wish to raise a question building on the one she raised earlier with respect to supervised access and support orders, the two countervailing bookends of reforms for parents in conflict over their children.

Recently I received an inquiry which disturbs me, and



I wondered if you might care to look into it on behalf of women in the province. It boils down to a husband, divorced, who for 15 years has not made any of his support payments. Under the new legislation he was sought out and the amounts were determined. His reaction to this was to go on welfare, and finally he ended up in court. As of last Thursday, with two counsel present, of course, the judge reduced the \$26,000 in arrears to a figure of \$5,000 and then written off completely. I'd be willing to share with you the case, and I have the woman's and her daughter's permission to have it looked into.

To go from that specific case to speak in more general terms, to what extent are we monitoring the response of using welfare as a means of avoiding the responsibilities of payment? To what degree is social assistance calculating payments that are or are not being made, and is there anything we can do, because this is only one more slap in the face of women who feel that all they're going to get out of this ultimately is toughened rules for access and not highly successful rules for ensuring support payment transfers.

I'm familiar with the program, as you know, and I don't wish to get into a debate on it. I think there are some tremendously positive elements of it, which I support, and I know that it has its bureaucratic challenges. Having said that, though, this is a completely new glitch that we may or may not have anticipated and I'm hopeful that from a policy perspective your government's examining it, because I would consider it a form of abuse but also further a slap at women who are sole-support parents even when there is a court-ordered support payment required, in most case and predominantly the cases of men not paying and women still left responsible.

Could you talk to us a bit about that area? I'll share with you the case because, quite frankly, I was very upset at getting these kinds of details.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I hope you will share the case because it certainly is something that we're interested in as well. It is extremely difficult for us to trace where someone is so vindictive and persistent, as in this case a non-payer, as to quit a paying job and go on to welfare. I mean, that is quite a remarkable level of vindictiveness, in my view. I think my mother's expression was "cutting off your nose to spite your face," that kind of response.

However, the reality is that if someone has in fact avoided paying for 15 years, the arrears are likely to be substantial. In this particular time it may appear to people that they will never catch up because the arrears are so enormous, and this is something that has concerned us.

Under the original support and custody orders enforcement plan, the flat provision was that when you owed arrears, you could have your wages garnished up to 50% no matter what your own needs were, in order to fill those needs. Certainly, in our experience, that meant that where someone's income was lower, where they had taken on a new family, often we were creating a new problem. So what we did was to make it possible for the family support office to work out a schedule of payments with people to try and discourage this kind of behaviour and to really take account of what the income was at the moment.

We've seen lots of families drop quite substantially in income during this recession. What we were finding was people who had always been good payers all of a sudden not able to pay at the level, not wanting to get a variance of the order because they agreed that it was appropriate for them to be paying at that level if they were earning at that level and so wanting a payment plan, still accruing some arrears for when they get their income tax rebate back or when things pick up in business and so on. We have organized that and we have found that has eased a lot of the tension in the system and has acted as a disincentive for this kind of behaviour.

We're also hoping that this long history that you describe, because we have the automatic wage deduction orders, won't happen for people. In other words, we won't be able to get people building up \$50,000, \$60,000, \$150,000 bills because we haven't collected effectively over the period of time.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Minister, because I want to pass back to my colleague, but I'm familiar with how the process works. I really was hoping you could just explain to me or to the committee if people who apply for welfare have their calculation—are there any calculations, adjustments or transfers? It's impossible to garnishee a social assistance cheque.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** That's right.

**The Chair:** So I was confused when you said the family support office works out various arrangements.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Not on welfare.

1650

**The Chair:** Okay. So I'm just leaving it with you—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Certainly on UIC.

**The Chair:** —without getting a fulsome description of the process that both Mrs Witmer and I are familiar with, but can I leave with you this issue of judges who are responding in this way and, if I can leave with you, which is what I'd prefer to do, any form of tracking mechanism where persons on social assistance are now appearing before justices and using it? This was instigated by the male on welfare. He wanted to make his point, so he instituted the action in court to get all of his past history wiped out and that's why the woman felt stabbed.

I'd rather just leave it with you for you to examine and to monitor as one of the other statistics that you are monitoring in your capacity as the Attorney General through the court system, and also in your capacity as women's issues advocate. So if I could leave that with you—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I'm sure you'd rather leave it, but I would like to just say two things: Yes, we are monitoring it and, number two, judges have to take into account the availability of income and they are required to vary orders and to indeed look at the ability of people to pay the arrears. That is their job and we are looking at that. I understand how that feels to people, but if there's no money there there's no point in accruing a debt that's never going to be paid anyway.

**Mrs Witmer:** I'd just like some clarification from you, Mr Chair, as to how much time each one of us will

have. We're going to be concluding this today?

**The Chair:** Yes, it was by agreement; we'll continue the cycle. I think we would only be short by 14 or 15 minutes, so we're just going to continue and the Chair will endeavour to make sure the time's spread equitably among the three parties.

**Mrs Witmer:** So there's no vote or anything?

**The Chair:** We will have a vote at 6 o'clock today to complete these estimates.

**Mrs Witmer:** Okay. Is there a vote in the House, though, as well?

**Mrs Haslam:** There might be.

**The Chair:** I indicated earlier that we're hopeful that we won't be called to the House until approximately 6, but we're watching that and we only have one vote for this office to complete tonight. You have 10 more minutes, Ms Witmer.

**Mrs Witmer:** This afternoon, my colleague Mr Harnick was in the process of asking you a question regarding the day care centre in his community. They've been trying to get some funding from the ministry and, actually, I think this follows in the footsteps of the concerns that have been raised by the Liberal Party and by myself as well.

The particular day care centre there, Little Prince, had already raised \$200,000 of the \$375,000 that was necessary to properly equip the centre and they were looking for some additional help. By the way, this is a non-profit centre and it was the private sector that had given them the money thus far.

Apparently, the city of North York has only half the number of infant, toddler and preschool day care spaces it requires. My colleague asked the minister to explain why they were giving \$1.4 million to a day care centre in Barrie, \$800,000 to a centre in King City, and yet they weren't able to find the funds for a centre in central North York, which would have allowed them to increase the number of spaces available to the children from 27 to 90.

Obviously, this community feels it is being discriminated against and, apparently, this evening North York council will be discussing a motion that is going to ask the minister to respond to the discrepancies in the funding practices.

Mr Harnick goes on to say in his question, which he didn't have a chance to do the second part of:

"Minister, your government has refused to fund the McKee McKids day care centre in my riding, you've put the private day care centres out of business, and now you refuse to adequately fund the Little Prince day care centre.

"Can you explain to the people of my riding what your government is doing to provide workplace child care services in central North York, where studies have shown" it is a priority?

I guess this is one of the problems I indicated yesterday. It's fine to drive the private day care centres out of business and to use the money, but the issue is that there just are not spaces for the children at the present time.

Could you respond, or did you want to deal with that at another time?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Well, no. I'm happy to give you what I can give you, but just a reminder that I'm no longer the Minister of Community and Social Services. I can tell you the process that we put into place, which was indeed to try and attain some equity across the system.

If you look at the city of Metropolitan Toronto and you look at the number of spaces that are available, because Metropolitan Toronto has been a willing supporter of child care for many years, it has, on almost every occasion when new spaces are available, gobbled up 40% to 50% of the subsidized spaces that are available. That means that even though there's a huge need—I recognize that there's a huge need and that there are waiting lists—per capita the service in Metropolitan Toronto is considerably better than it is in some of the surrounding and growing areas. If you listen to the people like the Fair Share for Peel people in Peel region or the people in York region and they talk about the per capita availability of child care in that growing area and then we talk about fairness between the ministry putting its dollars into those very, very severely underserved areas, we get a different picture.

Every one of our communities needs and wants more child care. In times of scarce resources there has to be a plan whereby you try to attain some equity for the various communities, and that's what the ministry is attempting to do. We've set up a management plan that is part of the whole structure of delivery. It works through the area offices. It is very much in touch with what's happening where child care centres are being built in schools, because that has skewed things. The building of the child care centres in schools without any kind of discretion has meant that we might end up with a child care in a school next to an existing non-profit child care. That was a flaw in that plan.

**Mrs Witmer:** It definitely was.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** But we now are enabling school boards to switch that eligibility to other schools in order to spread out the amount of child care. We've learned a lot through our mistakes over a number of governments and a number of years to try and make this a better plan.

The last thing I would say to you is that because of the mixed responsibility and jurisdiction over child care, because we still share with the municipal sector 20% of the funding of any subsidized spaces that we do have and that sort of thing, it makes it very difficult to make these decisions either on one side or the other. Where there is a scarcity of child care and municipalities have refused to be players in the game, the province has stepped in and created provincially approved corporations to try and balance that out. Where a municipality is a player but is experiencing budget difficulties and is not continuing to access new spaces at the same rate, we have to respect that budget decision on the part of that level of government. So when we talk about unfairness, we really need to try and put it into that kind of perspective, and I'm sure when the minister responds in direct terms around the decision-making around those particular centres, he will be putting it in that context of a planning system.



**Mrs Witmer:** I think it's extremely unfortunate that this government has been so motivated to drive the private day care centres out of business and, as I indicated yesterday, many independent operators, the majority of whom were women, have had that opportunity taken away from them. The money, I believe very strongly, could have been better spent in providing subsidies to the children in this province who so desperately need the help.

I think we were doing a good job in this province of having both non-profit and private day care. I think the emphasis always needs to be on the quality of care we provide, and also we need to continue to allow parents to have a choice. Unfortunately, at the present time that's been put totally in the background and as a result we now have a lack of child care spaces available to people in this community of North York. I think it's a very tragic situation.

Pornography is an issue that has certainly been of great concern to not only women but certainly men as well. I think it's a problem that everyone recognizes is serious. I was certainly shocked to discover that there were a number of video games available, and I brought it to the attention of the House, that capitalized on violence against women and portrayed women as shrieking designated victims.

I guess my question to you, Minister, is, what specific action has been taken to limit or ban the use of these slasher video games that are so very graphic?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** One of the issues for us is the extent to which we, as a province, can regulate this sort of thing. There's some, shall we say, ambiguity in our own provisions as to whether these fit or not, and we're getting a legal opinion on that now and as to what we can do.

1700

As you may know, the manufacturer of the particular games that you talked about has agreed to label those games, and at least that's a bit of a move forward. I frankly think, as I said at the time, that the most effective thing for us to do is to really work on the consumer aspect of this, try and prevent young people from purchasing them for themselves to the extent that we can. We know that there is certainly some indication that the same kind of bylaw protection that's there for video film may be there for video games, and that's something that needs to be looked at.

I'm hoping that the new parents' council and the local councils that we hope will evolve at the local level will act as real incentives for communities to look at our consumer patterning and how our permissiveness about the acquisition and the use of these kinds of things is partly a community responsibility.

I think you and I were agreed in the House that as parents we have a responsibility, as a community we have a responsibility, and that when laws are failing us then we have to take some action as communities, and we often are more effective in that way. That certainly is a very important part of our task from our perspective at the women's directorate in terms of encouraging women's

consumer groups, like Media Watch, like CASandRA, to continue their lobbying efforts with advertisers, with manufacturers, and to work with them, where we can, in the regulation of these things.

**Mrs Witmer:** I recognize that communities have to play their part, but I really do believe very strongly that this is an issue that the women's directorate needs to be dealing with. I think the government needs to give some very strong direction that this is not acceptable, and I hope that whatever information you do receive will enable you to plan a course of action that will eliminate these video games from our shelves.

**Ms Christel Haec (St Catharines-Brock):** My apologies for having to take care of a couple of constituency questions earlier, for not being able to ask this sooner.

There's an issue that keeps coming up in the riding that I'd like to raise with you, and it relates to an agency that is doing very good work. It's called Design for a New Tomorrow and it is providing counselling to women who have been involved in an abusive relationship and are trying to get themselves on to a new footing.

The thing that is interesting to me about this particular agency is that it's also trying to deal with the abusers. They are, in fact, trying to provide counselling for men who are abusing their partners, and they find themselves quite challenged in maintaining the funding for that, which we all realize is a major issue for every agency that is out there. But they also do encounter a certain bias about the fact that within the larger community, if government funds this particular agency, somehow women are denied the service.

I'm curious really as to how to make sure that we are dealing with the abuser as well as someone who has been abused, and how we build that balance to make sure that as a society we are trying to improve the situation.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I wouldn't pretend that in any way we have built the balance that a lot of people think ought to be attained, although from a feminist perspective, since the balance has all been in the patriarchal direction in the past, the fact that the resources in a program that's under \$100 million primarily go to women and children is understandable, and I think we need to be supportive of that.

The women's directorate does not have a mandate to directly fund programs for men. We certainly have an interest in trying to persuade those ministries, particularly MCSS and MCS—corrections—to, when they fund these programs, fund these programs in a way that is accountable to the women.

One of the very good things about Design for a New Tomorrow is that because it offers both services, it has an integrated approach which clearly talks about the necessity to be accountable for the safety and security of women and children in these situations and it has designed its program specifically with that in mind.

Unfortunately, because we put a moratorium on additional funding, without having done the work we have done and are in the process of doing to evaluate and adjudicate what makes a successful program and how we



monitor that and so on, they've been caught in the same moratorium as other programs.

I appreciate their difficulty and certainly I've known their work for a long time, particularly with women. Certainly the video they produced is used in many school programs because it is such an excellent way of talking very frankly about the problems for women and children in this kind of situation. The sensitivity with which they regard all of their clients is well known, so it is by no means a reflection on their program that they also are in the situation of not being able to get increased funding even though they can certainly show increased need.

**Ms Haeck:** They do find themselves in the awkward position of having, say, judges, as a result of these cases, coming to court and ordering the abuser to go into the program, and obviously the whole process of trying to get in is a lengthy one. In fact, some males have called in advance realizing that they are continuing a long-standing habit of abuse and have tried to stem that by calling in advance to basically deal with the problem and they've obviously had to wait six months in order to deal with this. So there have been a number of family breakups, even though they've realized that they're into the program.

If I may make a pitch for my local program, I—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Could I say to you that one of the issues for us is the whole issue around court-ordered treatment. That is an issue, to begin with. Speaking as the AG, how can we assure judges, who see this as an appropriate sentencing mechanism and who are encouraged by the training they are increasingly getting to look at this as an increased possibility of changing people's behaviour, of the quality of the program to which they might send somebody? That's number one and that's an issue.

Number two, is it appropriate for someone to access that treatment prior to a trial or is that an effort to convince the court that there's real change when in fact there may not be? It may simply be a change while people are awaiting trial.

**Ms Haeck:** If I've led you to believe that it's strictly—not to suggest there aren't instances of that, but very clearly, in speaking to the agency, it has encountered people who definitely have come to a crunch in a relationship and have come to that self-consciousness that they have a problem and they would like to undertake to do something about it.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Which is the best prognosis for success. Our problem is, what if that person can't access treatment because a court-ordered person who is not a good prospect for treatment gets the first place? These are the kinds of questions that we have to answer. What is the balance between mandated treatment and voluntary treatment, particularly when we know, from what has been done, that in most cases voluntary treatment is going to be something that is more successful?

The last thing is, how do we make sure that people don't measure the success of one of these programs by whether or not the marriage stays together? It has to be balanced on whether or not the violence stops. That may

mean that the violence stops and the marriage doesn't go on or the marriage may go on and the violence occur to somebody else. That's the issue, and that's not always true. When we get evaluations of programs, we don't always know what the measurement is. If this is successful, on whose judgement, and has the woman been asked whether it's successful for her? Has the violence stopped towards her or, to her knowledge, to anybody else? So those are all questions that need to be asked, and in this particular program there's a real willingness to ask those kinds of questions and to be accountable. I want to stress that.

But that is not true across the board. We have some instances of programs that frankly have become part of the problem in communities because they have lulled the community into believing that they have the answer to violence and in fact have acted as a licence to do more violence.

**Ms Haeck:** So a review of these different programs is ongoing?

1710

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** As part of this overall consultation and base program review that we're doing, one of the issues we have to resolve is that, and what the role of the directorate is in terms of men's programs. We believe we have a role in terms of making them accountable and in trying to help integrate them with the services of women so that in fact they are responsive to the needs of women and children, but should we be providing them? Is that where that appearance comes that money is being taken away from women and given to men who are the perpetrators? We have to remember that victims all over this province believe very strongly that we put more of our resources into perpetrators than we do into victims, and that's a very big sore point among victims.

**Ms Haeck:** I don't know if any of my other colleagues have a question at this point, but I did quickly want—

**The Chair:** Ms Haslam has a brief one when you're done.

**Ms Haeck:** Okay. Through, say, corrections, where someone has in fact been sentenced, is there a program that is dealing with the abuser in a way that would hopefully lead to this person having a better understanding of his problem?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** There are programs. We do live in hope. Some of them are not institutional programs—they're part of community programs—and part of them are institutional programs. There is great scepticism within the feminist community that this is done on a gender basis and that it is an analysis of power and control issues, partly because of the system within which it resides.

**Mrs Haslam:** I have a couple of areas. How much time do I have, Mr Chairman?

**The Chair:** About four and a half, five minutes.

**Mrs Haslam:** All right. I'll go with one, then, and possibly get into another one later. They're both close to my heart and it's hard to pick. Let's go in with long-term care, an issue that I'm following and very involved in.

Women tend to statistically be shown as care givers at the end of their lives. They tend to be the stronger ones. They tend to be the survivors. They tend to be the care givers for a lot of seniors, mates and spouses, who are experiencing difficulties in their senior years. So when we look at long-term care—and I agree with the direction the government's going in accessing programs within the community and making it easier for the seniors to remain out of institutions and closer to home and closer to family and, as a result, less expensive to the overall health care system—it does concern me that women will be the care givers in those home situations. Do you see this as a future problem, or how can you, as the women's advocate, do some advocacy for this group of women, the seniors, in the future?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** As someone who is involved as a primary care giver for my own parent—

**Mrs Haslam:** That's right. I'd forgotten, yes. Sorry.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** —it's something that's very important to me personally, and I can advocate not only in a theoretical way but in a very real way.

We have a very close concern about this issue because we have the prime responsibility not only within Ontario but, frankly, federally, provincially and territorially around the whole issue of work and family responsibility. We see that as being not only a responsibility to children but a responsibility to adults who may be disabled, to partners who may be disabled, and obviously to elder care as well.

We have had a number of meetings with long-term care providers, people who work within the provision community who are extremely concerned that most of their workers are women and are in a low-paid and low-status kind of occupation. Their concerns expand to being not just for themselves, because as they go in on an itinerant basis, often a couple of hours a week, maybe an hour a day, what they see is that that care giver in the home who is the primary care giver for most of the time is a woman, and so they're advocating on behalf of that. There's a group of senior women who have met with us who continue to be concerned about that.

We all acknowledge that because of our longevity women are most likely to be the ones in the long run, once we get community care established, to benefit the most from being able to stay in their own homes. Right now, what happens to women is that they care for somebody, as my mother did for 20 years, and then in their senior years find themselves all alone in the house and everybody says, "You should go to an institution." They say, "I've been cheated, not only of the 20 years of looking after somebody else, but now here I am going into an institution and I want the care to stay in my own home."

We have a conundrum: The care givers and a large, large group of the care recipients are women. How do we resolve this? Obviously we can try and increase the number of hours and the kinds of supports we can give.

One of the things that I am really, really regretful that we have had to at least reduce, if not absolutely do away with, is the home share program, because I think that in

the long run finding ways people can share not an institutional setting but a home in those circumstances may help and may be better for us, but we just haven't had a community-building process that has really built that.

I don't think we've got the answers; I'll be quite frank with you. We see women more and more stressed out. They're sandwiched between their own families, their own children, sometimes their own grandchildren and their parents and sometimes their grandparents, trying to work, trying to give to the community and being really stressed as a result. Much of the work that's been done on stress for women has centred around that kind of work.

We do have some respite care. I think respite care is a very important issue; not only, you know, two weeks in the summer but a couple of hours every day, so that you can at least have some time to do your own thing, even if it is to sit with a cup of tea or have a bath.

Particularly with Alzheimer's patients, it's extremely important for someone in that circumstance, because the danger to the person needing care of being left alone is so great that people neglect themselves. We met with a woman who had a full-time job and gave that job up and yet was not able to be paid, because she was a family member, for care giving, either through the insurance program which her parent had, because care givers cannot be family members under most insurance programs, or under our own program.

Those are all things we have to look at, and we are only at the beginning. They've all been brought up in the consultations on long-term care. We have some very good ideas about how we might tackle them. They're going to be different for different communities, depending on the infrastructure we have. But we certainly are working with that, with our friends in Health and Community and Social Services and the seniors area of Citizenship.

**Ms Dianne Poole (Eglinton):** I'm assuming we have, what, about 12 minutes left per caucus?

**The Chair:** You've got about 16 minutes.

**Ms Poole:** That's considerable. I have actually a series of questions I would like to table with the minister. Obviously, she may have some time to answer them after I finish the complete list, but in the event that they are not answered at this time, I would ask for the minister to provide a written response to them through the committee Chair.

Secondly, Mr Chair, I wonder if I might suggest, since we have had three days of hearings on women's issues estimates and we haven't yet received the Hansards from them, if within the next week or so after we've received the Hansards, if we have additional questions, that we could table them with the committee clerk for provision to the minister. Would that be acceptable?

**The Chair:** That's an awkward request. Let me try and be brief in my explanation. We have a mechanism to pursue those questions, and that is order paper questions. That is a mechanism available to all members when the House is sitting right through. In fairness, if the minister



is willing to, but if the minister was to as well ask me, "Is it required," I'd have to rule in that way. I'm not called upon for a ruling, I'd prefer I wasn't called upon for a ruling, but the Chair suggests that there is a mechanism called order paper questions. The minister and her staff, to the best of their ability, it's my opinion, have responded quickly with what material they could and have undertaken to return with—there have been requests and there are more requests. I'll let the minister respond briefly now.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** My only concern is that order paper questions have to be directed to the ministry which is involved. We've taken great latitude in providing for you, with the cooperation of the other ministries, what we can in this process, because we are so tied into those processes that we felt that was the appropriate way. But I would think the order paper questions would probably garner you more direct information and be more accountable for the information.

1720

**Ms Poole:** Just very briefly, my experience with order paper questions has not been positive as far as time lags are concerned, notwithstanding the standing orders.

**The Chair:** To be fair, you can approach the Speaker with that, but my responsibilities in my capacity are far more limited than the Speaker's. I think you've got a better chance with him, is what I'm saying.

**Ms Poole:** Perhaps what I will do then—I have most of those questions right now, and it would be very few that we're talking about—is just simply write the minister and ask for her response to me as an individual and as critic for women's issues.

I must compliment this minister on her responses. They have been timely and they have been quite fulsome generally, which is not always the happy occasion. I will give the list of questions where I'd like further information.

Concerning slasher films and slasher video games, I think the minister shares our concern about this particular form of so-called entertainment. We would like the minister to furnish any copies of letters to the federal government in this regard, including responses. We would also like the minister to outline what she believes could be done at the provincial level, within the provincial mandate, to resolve this particular problem.

Serial killer trading cards: I would like the minister, as Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, to give an explanation—and also, if she wishes, as Attorney General—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I am one person.

**Ms Poole:** You can wear either or both hats to answer this particular question, Minister—of why it is not appropriate for the provincial government to regulate the retail sales of these particular cards and, secondly, what the Ontario women's directorate is doing, both on this issue and on the slasher films.

The third question is about Jobs Ontario Training. The minister made a statement in the House some time ago about the fact that Jobs Ontario Training would be a very positive initiative for women and was specifically geared

to women, and yet the figures that we had out of the Ministry of Education and Training showed that a disproportionate number of the jobs were actually going to males as opposed to females and that this did not seem to be holding true.

I would like the minister to give us up-to-date statistics in this regard, whether there has been improvement in that regard and what the involvement of the Ontario women's directorate has been with Jobs Ontario Training in ensuring that it's very sensitive in meeting women's needs.

I would ask the minister if she could provide us with up-to-date family support plan statistics. I understand it's not as minister of women's issues that you would have these, but I'd appreciate that provision.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** That's fine.

**Ms Poole:** Also, could the minister elaborate on the announcement she made in June about the ministry's actions to remedy some problems in the program and what progress has been made to date.

I was hoping we'd actually have an opportunity to go into judges' training today, but time doesn't allow. I mentioned in my opening comments the federal-provincial report on gender equality in the Canadian justice system. I would like the minister to give us her response to that report and some of the things we might be implementing provincially with respect to the recommendations in that report. Secondly, could she provide us with information as to how many judges have undergone training with respect to the issues of sexual assault and wife assault and what proportion this is of the—I don't want to call them provincially controlled judges, but judges under the mandate of the Attorney General.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** No one controls judges.

**Ms Poole:** Absolutely; one should never try.

With women's centres, concerning the stabilized funding, two questions: Could the minister tell us which ones received the \$1 million in stabilized funding and whether indeed this \$1 million is in each of the two years or \$2 million total? Secondly, BC gave a core funding model, and we would just like your response to that particular model, which has been quite heavily lobbied for by the women's centres.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Which we modeled ours on.

**Ms Poole:** Yes, but I believe the BC model is actually core funding, not for a two-year period but actually a commitment for annual core funding.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It's the delivery of ours that is to be reviewed in two years; not the actuality of it, but the delivery of it, whether OWD continues to do that as an on-line ministry. In my understanding, and certainly what we have been saying to the centres, it is permanent funding. It's only the delivery that will be reviewed after two years.

**Ms Poole:** I have only a couple more questions. When we discussed the home workers, the minister reaffirmed her commitment to trying to resolve the inequities they face. We would ask if the minister would inform us as a committee of her discussions with the Ministry of Labour



in this regard, particularly relating to a time frame.

We would like to again reinforce Mrs O'Neill's question about private sector child care workers and any guarantees of security of tenure and freedom of mobility that the minister could elaborate on, whether they will be forthcoming.

I would like to know what actions the Ontario women's directorate has taken with respect to police sensitivity training relating to victims of violence. As for as the advisory council on women's issues, the minister, I believe, did announce it'd conduct only six regional outreach meetings per year. Will we be made aware of these meetings and what other outreach activities are planned?

Two final questions relating to questions by Mrs Haslam and Mr Wiseman: Mrs Haslam brought up a concern that I share about some of the male batterers programs and counselling. I would ask the minister if, when the symposium paper is available, she could share it with us and also perhaps a bit more elaboration on her statement about the lack of accountability for the safety of the spouse, since I believe that if the couple are residing together, there's already a safety problem and the counselling may very well be the best safety mechanism one could have.

Finally, Mr Wiseman brought up the problems that women have had historically in banking and that still seem to continue, perhaps to a lesser degree but very much there. Women still seem to have problems breaking through as CEOs. The Ontario women's directorate grants focused on quite a bit of union activity, such as the Women in Steel program, which was \$50,000 to the United Steelworkers of America. It's not that I don't support that kind of training for leadership roles in the union, but I wonder if the minister could tell us if these types of programs are, first of all, available in areas such as banking, CEOs and the business sector and, secondly, if they are available and applicable, are we getting applications and why are we not seeing any results?

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Is there any time for the minister to respond?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Some of the things are very readily available and we should be able to get them to you very quickly, because they're just part of the ongoing monitoring work that we do with our interministerial groups on a lot of these things. What we can provide for you we will as quickly as possible.

I'd like to make a little comment on the gender issues in the justice system, because you have raised it and I do owe you an answer on it actually. We're deeply concerned. Every study that's been done, whether it's Bertha Wilson's study, whether it's the Canadian Bar Association—Ontario study that was done here in Ontario prior to that, the feminist analysis group that has done some work with our own law society here, the employment systems review that we're doing in our own ministry at the present time, consistently we are seeing issues of gender as very important. The federal panel on violence identified many of those same issues. It is an area of deep concern.

As we go through this session, many of the amendments in the Courts of Justice Act we'll be bringing forward are designed to remedy some of those situations. We're working with the CBAO and with the Law Society of Upper Canada on their discipline measures and on some of the gender issues that were raised during that study, because it's of great concern to them as well, with a view that at some point there will have to be some adjustment in the Law Society Act, probably around discipline processes, which has been asked for. The same is true of course in looking at the effect of gender in terms of the justice system. Are women treated the same when they are offenders? There's been some work done there. It's obviously an area that's really close to my own heart, and we'll be working very hard on trying to do that.

**1730**

With the judges, in terms of the details of their training sessions, we can get you some information, both federally and provincially, on some of the curriculum materials. I'm not sure I can tell you how many have been trained because I'm not sure the chief justice or the chief judge would make that available to us. We can ask.

**Mrs Witmer:** I have some concluding remarks I would like to make. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the minister. I have always found you extremely approachable. Although we do have some different viewpoints, I don't feel that prevents us from communicating and talking and doing something about the concerns we share. I appreciate that and I respect your point of view.

I hope that the last three days will allow the women's directorate and the minister to recognize that there are women within the province whose voices have not been listened to in the past. There is a feeling by, I would say, a majority of women in this province that the women's directorate does not represent their point of view and I hope that as a result of this discussion and this debate we will become more tolerant.

As I said in the House the other day, I think we need to reject the image of the female as being the victim and as being powerless. I think we need to recognize that women have strength. They do have power. They should be working together. I believe it's extremely important that we refocus our thinking. To continue to be defensive and angry at the way women have been victimized is a waste of our energies. It is time to start celebrating our successes, and I believe that's extremely important. When I talk to females about our successes, they come up afterwards and they're proud. Young girls don't feel good and there's no point in continuing to tell them how we've been victimized. Let's tell them what we're doing that gives us power and that's going to allow us to achieve equality with men.

Let's refocus our thinking and let's also be considerate of all the viewpoints. I believe that's something that's not happened in this province at times. There are women who support abortion; there are women who are opposed. That's up to the individual. Please don't put people down for their viewpoint. I felt put down the other day by a member of the government for the questions I was

asking, and for many women it would stop you from even asking your questions if someone is ridiculing you as you make an attempt. That was of concern to me. So I plead for all parties in this House and all people to be considerate of all viewpoints. We might not agree, but please do be considerate. I ask you to have an open mind and I ask all women to recognize that if we work together with our male colleagues, we will have power. It's time to welcome men, it's time to work with males and I think it's time to recognize that there are priorities for women that need to be addressed. I believe it's time to stop portraying men constantly as being domineering and aggressive.

I'm concerned sometimes about the portrayal. I can tell you that my daughter, when she saw that one commercial—and I've had mixed response. It was the one where there's a little girl, and she says, "Tell me why Daddy doesn't pay his support." Her question to me was, "Are all daddies like that?" I was a little bit concerned. I know that it had some impact, but I hope that all females in this province didn't get the impression that all daddies were bad and didn't pay their support. I have some concerns about the way we portray men and fathers as not paying their support. I'm not sure what type of impression it's creating. We want to make sure that the issue is resolved, but I would suggest that we be sensitive and that we perhaps encourage other means of getting our message across.

We need to encourage each woman in this province to express her personal opinion and we need to listen to that opinion. Again, I say be tolerant. Women need to make their own choices about their sexuality, and also about their appearance, and also about the issues that are of concern to them.

Most women would agree that at the present time there is disproportionate male power in our society. We recognize that is wrong, but we cannot attack men on the basis of gender. We need to work, as I say, together and we need to ensure that women in this province and women throughout the world get more respect, more self-respect, more education, more safety, better health care and better government representation. I feel very strongly that if we're ever going to have legislation that addresses the concerns of women in this province and this country, it's going to happen because our numbers increase within the legislatures. That's an area that gives women power. That's an area where change can take place and we can all work towards making that happen.

Whether or not we all agree, I believe also that money gives women power. We need to ensure that women are put into positions where they do have access to money and positions of responsibility. We mentioned the CEOs. You can have a great deal of influence when you're in that particular position.

We now have a female director of education within our school system, and it's a woman whom I'm proud to know. I can remember sitting on a committee when she was first appointed superintendent. She will have an impact on that board of education because she is a role model in a position of power, and women and females will see her.

So I urge you to be tolerant of other beliefs and other lifestyles. We might not agree—that's okay—but we are all entitled to our own beliefs and our own lifestyles.

I hope that as a result of these deliberations we all come away knowing there are issues that need to be addressed, and also knowing that together we do have an opportunity to make this world a more equal and fair place for women in our society.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'd just like to pick up a little bit on what Mrs Witmer was saying, because I think it's a point that probably needs to be discussed a bit more. A comment was made, and I think it relates back to the question of the advertising that passed through the AG's department, I guess last year, over the question of support. You were saying that your daughter had asked you, "Do all men not pay support?" because of that particular ad. I hear what you're saying, but I've got to say that, on the one hand, when it comes to equity issues we really need to take them head on.

Far too often the compliance of not saying anything or not challenging anything sometimes when it comes to equity issues, not only for women but all those equity issues out in our society—things are allowed to keep on going as long as we in society don't challenge them. I think one of the things we need to do on all sides of the House and in all classes of society is to take on some of those views that are not necessarily about making sure people have equal access and equal say.

I relate to a personal experience of my own. I originally came out of college and went into electronics and ended up working in a male-dominated workplace; there were no women where I worked. When you work in a male-dominated workplace such as that, you develop views over a period of time that are not healthy, to put it quite bluntly. I remember applying for a particular job that I was qualified for and ended up being selected, but the place where I went to work had an affirmative action program where it said, "We're hiring eight people, four of which will be women, four of which will be men." I remember thinking distinctly back then, "My God, imagine, there's probably all kinds of young qualified males that can get these jobs, and only because they're women are some women going to get the jobs."

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It took me that experience of somebody putting it right in front and stamping it on my forehead and saying, "Stop and think," to start realizing that women were just as equal to me and probably better in some areas than I was, and that we shouldn't be barring people because of who they are, what they look like, what their sex is, what their religion is, what their preferences are or what the colour of their skin is; it's that really we need to be bold and we need to challenge the things that have been the barriers in the way of people over the years. I know people don't like this, but sometimes you've got to hit them between the eyes so that people sort of stand back and go, "Oh, maybe we can move on."

**The Chair:** You meant that figuratively, I hope.

**Mr Bisson:** Figuratively, obviously. I can relate through personal experience, and it's only because



somebody at one point made it an issue with me that I finally started realizing that my views were not correct, and if I was going to be anywhere near the human being that we all should try to be in this society, I had to change. It was because people brought it head-on.

The second question is that of the Legislature. That is one that has concerned not only me but I know it's concerned the minister directly, because I've had chats and I know it's a concern to other people on the other side of the House, around the whole question about how women are treated in the Legislature, not only how women are treated sometimes but how people who are untraditional are not seen as fitting into the mould of this pink palace: people with disabilities, people of different colour, people of different languages, different backgrounds sometimes. If they don't fit into the mould that belongs to this place, quite often it could be a fairly intimidating place for people to be able to express themselves, for people to find their way and to contribute fully, equally, along with all of their colleagues.

I think there is a big job of education to be done around this place on all sides of the House. I watch what happens in question period and quite frankly I can understand why my children come to me and say, "Dad, it's a zoo." I understand this is politics and this is the art of politics as practised at Queen's Park, but sometimes it's brought to the extreme.

I know this has been an issue that has been a concern to you, Minister, especially around the question about how people are sometimes shouted down and heckled. Some of the comments have been made around question period—hopefully they don't show up in Hansard—where people say things under their breath or they heckle across the House when a female minister is answering to the crown. What I would ask the minister in the form of a question is what the minister has tried to do, through the women's secretariat or any other forum through the government, in order to try to deal with that whole issue about how we sometimes educate our own politicians.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We had an agreement when the federal report came out under the minister responsible federally, as women's issues ministers across the country, that we would approach our own Speakers and talk about the issue of decorum within the House and the way in which women were treated in the House. I came and testified in front of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly about that and can provide you with the Hansard of that.

I remain convinced that the adversarial nature of what we do in the House gives rise to behaviours that most of us secretly are very well aware are not very appropriate in this day and age, particularly when our constituents can bring us into their homes very easily. I need to be frank: I am embarrassed when I see school children up in the balcony watching us as role models. I find that embarrassing.

I would also say that it's not just the other side that makes noise when women ministers try to answer questions.

**Mr Bisson:** I agree.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I think that this is not something that can be looked at in a partisan way. We are all responsible for our own behaviour and we need to be working within each of our caucuses to really talk about whether we're being respectful to one another.

Equity and sameness are not equivalent, if you like. It's very hard to get that out without repeating words. The variety of representation that has been chosen by the people of Ontario ought to be respected by us. Our constituents elected us. They elected a variety of people who have different genders, different race, different languages, and that needs to be respected. It's really difficult, I think, the task that we do if we aren't conscious of the need to be more respectful of one another. We need to model that more to one another and certainly to all those who watch, otherwise we will find that this is a very unattractive place for people to come. It will become less and less the centre of our democracy unless it is seen, within itself, to be a democratic place where people are respected. So that certainly is my view. I speak it very strongly. I talk about it as being a violent workplace. I would, if I were doing a safety audit in this place, give it a failing grade.

**The Chair:** Ms Haslam, and then I have Mr Hayes. You've actually got five minutes between you.

**Mrs Haslam:** I'm going to ask my question very quickly, because I agree with Mr Hayes's question and I don't want him to miss his chance. But my concern is that I was reading in your facts and figures that 60% of the users of community information centres are women. I know that as the Minister of Culture and Communications I fought long and hard for core funding for community information centres, and part of the discussion was where that left women's centres, and did they not provide similar information? It wasn't the same, but it was almost an adversarial situation about who was going to get the funding. I am only saying that if 60% of the users of community information centres are women, then that shows the value of community information centres, and I would hope you would be advocating for continuing the funding of those in the future.

I'd like to pass and let Mr Hayes ask his question at this time.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Let me just say that of course I will, because you know I was your greatest advocate on treasury board.

**Mrs Haslam:** To put it on the record, I happen to feel that if it wasn't for the women's advocate, I would not have been quite as successful in obtaining that funding for community information centres. So I hope you will continue that advocacy role.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** In this draft document, and I'm on page 14, in the centre, the third paragraph down where it's highlighted talks about: "Business organizations like the chamber of commerce invoke free trade competition to demand Canada's tax rates be brought into line with Mexico. In doing so they know very well that this would reduce the revenue base on which social programs are built."

It goes on to talk about how "Women have benefited



from legislation and regulation designed specifically to address their disadvantaged position." Then, "Under NAFTA, labour market programs such as pay equity and employment equity may be perceived, by employers, as extra costs that limit their ability to compete." It goes on to talk about how it may put pressure on the government to reduce interventions in the labour market designed to address women's disadvantaged position, and how "the agreement will exacerbate the economic inequality of women."

It is one of my concerns when we talk about the different groups. I know Ms Witmer talked about, and I certainly agree with this, how we have to get more women in government, more women in top executive positions, more women in the labour movement in some of the top positions, but it also kind of bothers me when you see a group like the chamber of commerce support free trade and NAFTA. I guess really my question is, maybe to all the women in this room: Do you think maybe we should have more women in such organizations as the chamber of commerce so we'll have people evenly across the board who would truly represent women's issues and women's concerns? Because we do know that NAFTA certainly drastically affects women's social programs and the number of women who have lost their jobs as a result of the free trade and also the threat of NAFTA.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I would hope we would have many women who would advocate on behalf of our being able to have supportive programs that benefit women. One of our fears, obviously, with NAFTA is that it would limit our ability as a province to provide that kind of protection for our own citizens, and that clearly is the jurisdictional issue that we see as being an issue.

I guess I have to, since I am the women's advocate for the whole province, remind everyone that we are all women, we have that in common, but we are certainly not totally homogeneous when it comes to our viewpoint on this. Some of the most vehement speakers in favour of NAFTA and free trade have in fact been women involved in business, and we are all aware of that.

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We as ought not to expect that we are always going to philosophically or politically take the same viewpoint. We have suffered from a viewpoint that has said we can't make changes because we as women are not unanimous in what change we want. We will never be unanimous. We are 52% of the people and we have differences among us that are reflective of our whole community. While I hope too that we will have many, many more women active in all these areas, we would be naïve if we expected that women will ever adopt a uniform political or philosophical position in terms of the way in which they respond.

As women we very much represent a great diversity within this community, and I would agree very strongly with Ms Witmer's statement that one of the things we need to do is to celebrate and support that diversity. We don't need to be the same in order to gain equality. What we need to do is have the same opportunity to make choices, and rather than talking about it as "experiencing

power," I would say "attaining positions of authority." I think that's one of the changes we as women have. Authority's different from power. Power is power; however, authority is an agreement that we have authority and can exercise that and must not abuse that authority. It's not quite the same as exercising power.

I would just say to you that yes, I think we will have a stronger community when women are in great numbers in similar positions, but we must not assume that will change the political nature of things. Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy and so on all thought that if women got into Parliament prohibition would immediately be here for ever, there would be no more poverty and we would be sure that every one lived a nice, white, middle-class life. That was not a very realistic picture of what happens. We also have differences among us and need to be able, as Ms Witmer suggested, to express those without thinking that there is only one narrow vision that we have to have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. That more or less completes the time.

**Mrs Haslam:** If I can have a point of clarification, there were a number of questions from the member opposite. Am I to assume that the answers would be shared with all committee members?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** All responses go through the clerk and the Chair, and then they'll be distributed to committee members.

**Ms Poole:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: I was going to call it a point of clarification, but I'm not sure, technically, that exists.

**The Chair:** I'm still waiting to hear your point of order.

**Ms Poole:** When I asked if I could submit a list of written questions and have them distributed through the estimates committee, you stated that the appropriate procedure would be to go through an order paper question. That wasn't my recollection of how I had dealt with Housing estimates in the past, so I did have the Hansard from July pulled. At that time, you said that it is "the custom to treat these kinds of requests in a form similar to an order paper question, and that staff be given sufficient time to prepare responses." Then you went on to say you'd like it to be "circulated through the clerk of the committee." I'm just trying to clarify whether I should put the written questions that I was going to do to Marion as minister for women's issues through the clerk of the committee.

**The Chair:** To put a fine point on the ruling, and based on my previous ruling, that ruling was to receive questions from you that were directed to the Minister of Housing with Ministry of Housing estimates. If you examine the estimates of the Office Responsible for Women's Issues, we're dealing with predominantly administrative dollars. The Chair would be more than willing to accept questions in the same vein as an order paper question directed to the minister for the expenditures under her responsibility as Minister Responsible for Women's Issues.

The minister, to her credit, has a varied background in cabinet and therefore has responded most generously to a lot of questions in those policy areas. But, frankly, these were the estimates of the office for women's issues. If the questions are of a philosophical nature, then I'm sure the minister will have no trouble getting back to you on them. But for me to impel this minister and her staff to seek out answers in other ministries is both an unfair and onerous responsibility. It has only surfaced since the governing party asked that these estimates be done. If this were the Ministry of the Attorney General, we wouldn't be having this discussion, and any questions that were directed to the Attorney General for the Minister of Housing would have been circuited in such a fashion. So that was the reason for my ruling and I appreciate your giving me an opportunity for giving a fuller explanation of my ruling.

**Ms Poole:** Actually, the bulk of the questions that I had remaining for written questions were to do with administration policy of the Ontario women's directorate.

**The Chair:** We'd be more than pleased to accept those and the Chair and this committee will ensure that those are forthcoming, but you've been so advised. I got a sense that you were differentiating your questions immediately after my first ruling to bring forward questions of that nature. That's what I sensed you were doing and I apologize if—

**Ms Poole:** Moi?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms Poole:** Sanguine moi?

**The Chair:** Can I please call the vote while we can still get it completed today? Is that sufficient, Ms Poole? Then thank you.

This is deemed by the committee then to complete the time that we wished for consideration of the estimates of the 1993-94 estimates of the office of the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. I will now call the vote.

All those in favour of vote 3201 of the estimates?

Opposed, if any?

That's carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the office responsible for women's issues be approved?

All those in favour?

Opposed, if any?

Carried.

Shall we now then report the 1993-94 estimates of the office responsible for women's issues to the House?

All those in favour?

Opposed, if any?

It's carried.

This meeting stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 26, at which time the committee will consider the office responsible for francophone affairs.

The committee adjourned at 1757.





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**Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

**\*Abel, Donald** (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

**\*Bisson, Gilles** (Cochrane South/-Sud N)

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*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Haslam, Karen (Perth ND) for Mr Lessard

O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L) for Mr Ramsay

Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L) for Mr Elston

Witmer, Elizabeth (Waterloo North/-Nord PC) for Mr Arnott

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Harrington, Margaret H. (Niagara Falls ND)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 26 October 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 26 octobre 1993

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

Office of Francophone Affairs

Office des affaires francophones

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum



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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 26 October 1993

The committee met at 1535 in room 151.

OFFICE DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES  
OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We've convened this afternoon to begin seven and a half hours of examination of the office responsible for francophone affairs. I'd like to welcome the minister today. As is our standing rule and custom, the minister will be given up to 30 minutes for opening comments. I hope that's not all your speech, Minister.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** Or however long it takes.

**The Chair:** Perhaps we should begin immediately, then.

**Hon Gilles Pouliot (Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs):** I certainly welcome the opportunity, Mr Chair, in terms of the needs speaking volumes, and this is a mere aperçu.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East):** The preamble is 30 minutes.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** You have of course been the recipient of the package, and with no further ado I will start with the introduction in the allocation of 30 minutes that is made available to the government vis-à-vis this set of estimates.

J'ai le plaisir, en ma qualité de ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, de vous présenter le budget des dépenses de l'Office des affaires francophones pour l'exercice 1993-94.

La dernière fois que l'Office des affaires francophones s'est présenté devant ce comité remonte au mois de novembre 1988, soit un an avant l'entrée en vigueur de la Loi sur les services en français. Depuis ce temps, l'Office a continué d'appuyer le gouvernement dans son engagement d'offrir des services de qualité en français.

Mais avant d'aller plus loin, permettez-moi de vous présenter les membres de la haute direction de mon personnel que j'ai conviés aujourd'hui pour répondre à toute autre question que vous pourriez avoir en la matière.

Sont présents de mon bureau — cérémonie un peu protocolaire avec le respect qu'on doit à M. David Edgar, adjoint législatif; M. Mohamed Boudjenane, adjoint spécial, politiques, Affaires francophones; et aussi M<sup>me</sup> Valérie Baldassare, adjointe aux communications, Affaires francophones; et de l'Office des affaires francophones, M. Rémy Beaugrand, directeur général; M<sup>me</sup> Louise Beaugrand-Champagne, directrice des opérations et des services aux ministères; M. Claude Décelles, directeur des communications et des relations communautaires; M<sup>me</sup> Jacqueline Frank, directrice des politiques et de la recherche; M. Lucien Pageau, chef des opérations; M. François Larsen, chef des relations communautaires et

responsable du fonds de soutien à la communauté.

La Loi sur les services en français: J'aimerais, pour commencer, retracer les grandes lignes de cette Loi. La Loi sur les services en français a été adoptée avec le soutien unanime des trois partis le 18 novembre 1986, qu'on s'en souviendra. Cette Loi, qui donnait aux divers ministères et à leurs organismes un délai de trois ans pour offrir leurs services au public en français, est entrée en vigueur le 19 novembre 1989.

Le caractère le plus important de la Loi est, à mon avis, qu'elle reconnaît la contribution de la communauté franco-ontarienne au patrimoine historique, linguistique et culturel de la province. Elle reconnaît aussi la nécessité de sauvegarder la langue et la culture françaises pour les générations à venir.

La Loi sur les services en français garantit le droit de tous les francophones de l'Ontario d'obtenir les services du gouvernement provincial en français dans 22 régions désignées de la province.

Les services garantis sont ceux offerts au public par les bureaux principaux de chaque ministère, organisme, conseil et commission du gouvernement, ainsi que par les bureaux situés dans les régions désignées ou desservant de telles régions.

Bien que les services offerts au public par des organismes financés par le gouvernement provincial, tels que les hôpitaux, les maisons de soins infirmiers ou sociétés d'aide à l'enfance, ne soient pas automatiquement couverts par la Loi, le Conseil des ministres peut désigner, par règlement, ces organismes comme fournisseurs de services en français.

Depuis l'adoption de la Loi, les francophones de l'Ontario peuvent utiliser le français dans leurs transactions quotidiennes avec le gouvernement ontarien.

Role of the minister: Under the act, my main role as minister responsible for francophone affairs is to develop and coordinate the policies and programs of the government relating to francophone affairs and the provision of French-language services.

Specifically, this involves preparing and recommending government plans, policies and priorities; coordinating, monitoring and overseeing the implementation of government programs in French by government agencies; making recommendations regarding the financing of government French-language programs; investigating and responding to public complaints about the provision of French-language services; and requiring the development of government plans for the implementation of this act and setting time limits for their submission.

Francophone community profile: Let me talk a bit about the francophone community and its makeup. As many of you know, the French presence in Ontario dates back over 350 years. For most of this province's francophones, the largest French-speaking population outside Quebec, Ontario is their place of origin. Accord-

ing to the 1991 Statistics Canada census, Ontario's francophone population numbers no less than 547,300 and represents 5.4% of the province's population, a population increase of 3,475 from the 1986 census, which was conducted five years earlier.

Geographically, Ontario's French-speaking community is dispersed throughout the province, with the highest concentration of francophones in the eastern and north-eastern regions of Ontario, which would naturally explain their presence among our midst today, and we welcome them, members of the loyal opposition and the third party, who are both from southeastern Ontario. In fact, 79.9% of Ontario's francophones live in areas of the province designated under the French Language Services Act.

Finally, although the majority of Ontario francophones are of European descent, the community is gradually evolving into a culturally diverse society whose members come from all parts of the world. This is most evident through the increase of students from ethnic backgrounds attending French-language schools in Toronto and Ottawa and through the emergence of groups such as the Association interculturelle franco-ontarienne, that represents the interests of francophones from diverse ethnocultural heritages.

But there is one thread that is common to all of Ontario's francophones and that is the French language. While for some French is a mother tongue, for others it is one of the first languages learned and still used. In the case of more recent arrivals, it is the language used to integrate into Ontario and Canadian society.

Therefore, in order to meet the challenges facing Ontario's francophone community, the Ontario government must build on the foundations laid by the French Language Services Act.

L'Office des affaires francophones a été créé en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français pour apporter le soutien et les ressources qui permettent au ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones de s'acquitter de ses responsabilités telles que décrites dans la Loi. En bref, l'Office administre la prestation des services en français à l'échelle du gouvernement.

L'Office des affaires francophones est doté d'un directeur général et d'un effectif de 31 personnes.

Sur le plan administratif, l'Office est formé de trois directions : premièrement, la direction des opérations et des services aux ministères surveille, elle, la mise en oeuvre des services en français dans l'ensemble du gouvernement. Elle reçoit aussi les plaintes du public portant sur les services en français et s'occupe de l'administration interne de l'Office.

Aussi, la direction des communications et des relations communautaires encourage les communications entre le gouvernement et la communauté francophone. Elle administre aussi un fonds de soutien communautaire.

La direction des politiques et de la recherche revoit les propositions du Conseil des ministres et aide les ministères à élaborer des politiques et programmes gouvernementaux qui répondent aux besoins des francophones.

Ces trois directions remplissent ensemble les quatre

grandes fonctions suivantes : premièrement, elles assurent le lien entre le gouvernement et la communauté ; deuxièmement, elles conseillent le gouvernement sur la prestation des services en français ; troisièmement, elles contribuent au développement de la communauté par l'entreprise du fonds de soutien ; et, dernièrement et enfin, elles veillent au partage des ressources entre nos partenaires au sein du gouvernement et de la communauté.

L'objectif de l'Office donc, en tant que principal lien entre le gouvernement et la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, se trouve clairement résumé dans l'énoncé de mission de son plan stratégique : aider les francophones, en tant que membres à part entière de la communauté ontarienne, à s'épanouir et à sauvegarder leur langue dans le respect de leur diversité culturelle ; et aider les ministères et les organismes gouvernementaux à comprendre la communauté francophone, à entretenir des relations avec elle, ainsi qu'à développer des services en français et à en assurer la prestation.

La participation de l'Office aux programmes de réduction des dépenses mis en place dans l'ensemble du gouvernement, comme le plan pluriannuel de réduction des dépenses, le cadre de responsabilités partagées et le plan de contrôle des dépenses à amené l'Office des affaires francophones à chercher de nouvelles façons d'offrir des services de qualité à ses deux clients : le gouvernement et la communauté francophone de la province. Le recours le plus fréquent en informatique est particulièrement déterminant.

Soucieux de rationaliser ses opérations et d'en minimiser les coûts, l'Office utilise des annonces communautaires au lieu des campagnes médiatiques ; permet l'accès direct à ses listes et répertoires grâce à un babillard électronique actuellement accessible à l'échelle de la province ; contacte aussi directement ses divers clients dont beaucoup se trouvent en dehors de la communauté urbaine de Toronto ; encourage le perfectionnement professionnel des membres de son personnel en leur permettant d'accéder à diverses bases de données et d'utiliser au mieux les ressources à leur disposition — en bref, un recyclage continu pour se tenir au courant et répondre aux besoins de cette chère population, la nôtre ; développer des projets nécessitant la collaboration du gouvernement et de la communauté.

Toujours au chapitre des économies, reconnaissant les restrictions des temps en cours, en cette année 1993, l'Office a éliminé le poste, qui est alors devenu vacant, de préposé aux plaintes. Les exigences de ce poste ont été revues et ce service est désormais assuré par d'autres membres du personnel.

Les dépenses provisoires réelles de l'Office pour l'exercice 1992-93 se sont élevées à 3 562 820 \$. Le chiffre proposé — mais c'est une diminution — pour 1993-94 est de 3 443 600 \$.

The government and French-language services: As I have mentioned, the office is a key adviser to the government on francophone affairs and the government-wide delivery of French-language services.

In this respect, I would now like to talk about how we work with other ministries to ensure that government



policies and programs respond to the needs of Ontario's francophone community.

As minister responsible for francophone affairs, I have taken every opportunity to meet with the community to learn about its needs. Over the years, I have worked closely with my colleagues to provide advice on francophone issues and to ensure that francophone interests are reflected in the broader government agenda. I am pleased to report that during the past year several accomplishments have been achieved across government in the areas of social justice, education and training and economic development. I understand the needs of the francophone community are also being considered in the following government policy initiatives: child care reform, redirection of long-term care and French-language education.

In my view, the ministry and agency initiatives I'm going to talk about are significant because they show an increased understanding of the particular needs of francophones and a government-wide commitment to provide quality services in French. I appreciate the cooperation of my colleagues across the government in the completion of these joint activities.

**Social justice:** While the government does not pretend to have a monopoly in the area of social justice, it would like to note the following issues. In that same area of social justice, I want to touch on those that have a particular impact on francophones.

**Child care reform:** Access to child care in French is crucial to fight the assimilation of young francophone children and to help their integration into the French-language education system.

Since the current child care system has been ineffective in developing quality French-language child care services, this has resulted in a significant gap between the level of services in the English- and French-language child care sectors. Consequently, the francophone community is following the progress of the child care reform initiative very, very closely indeed.

Francophones hope that the new child care reform will recognize the right to French-language child care services and the importance of linguistically and culturally appropriate child care settings in a child's development.

**1550**

**Agency designation:** As I mentioned earlier, many services are offered to the public through government-funded agencies such as hospitals, nursing homes and counselling centres. These agencies can be designated under the French Language Services Act if they fulfil certain criteria. They must show that they have the commitment and capability to deliver high-quality, accessible French-language services on a permanent basis. The agencies must also have French-speaking representation at the board and management levels.

The Office of Francophone Affairs reviews the proposed agency designations and advises cabinet if the criteria have been met. On the office's recommendation, cabinet passes a regulation to designate those agencies.

Agency designation gives the francophone community a guarantee of permanent access to quality services in

French. In this regard, the Ministry of Health and district health councils consulted with service providers and the francophone community. To date, 37 transfer payment agencies of the Ministry of Health have been designated under the act; 14 of those are indeed hospitals.

Also, since the act came into force on November 19, 1989, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has proceeded with the designation of 79 transfer payment agencies, ranging from day care centres to programs for the developmentally disabled and the elderly. As of spring 1993, 122 agencies have been designated.

La réorientation des soins de longue durée est d'un intérêt particulier pour la communauté. Les groupes de personnes francophones vulnérables, les personnes âgées et les personnes handicapées, par exemple, veulent avoir accès à des services dans leur propre langue. L'un des objectifs de la réorientation est d'assurer à la clientèle la prestation de services appropriés sur les plans linguistique et culturel.

Pour soutenir l'engagement du gouvernement envers la communauté francophone à cet égard jusqu'à maintenant, les francophones espèrent que la nouvelle Loi ou ses règlements leur garantiront l'accès à des services en français dans les régions désignées en Ontario.

Il me fait donc plaisir de souligner que dans la série de documents Partenariats produits par le ministère de la Santé, on y retrouve un engagement ferme à assurer la prestation de soins de longue durée en français.

Les questions liées au logement préoccupent de plus en plus la communauté francophone. L'Office, dans ses rapports avec la communauté, appuie des organismes comme la Coalition franco-ontarienne sur le logement, le Réseau ontarien des services de garde francophones, l'Association des centres pour aînés de l'Ontario, l'Association des sourds, afin de leur faciliter l'accès à leur gouvernement provincial.

En février 1993, la Coalition franco-ontarienne sur le logement était invitée par le ministre du Logement à participer au Comité consultatif de la politique cadre pour le logement, de manière à garantir que les besoins particuliers de la communauté francophone quant au logement soient bien représentés.

Par ailleurs, même si les francophones ne sont pas inclus — je parle ici de l'équité d'emploi dans la fonction publique de l'Ontario — sous la Loi sur l'équité en matière d'emploi, ils font toujours partie des groupes désignés reconnus dans le programme d'équité d'emploi dans la fonction publique de l'Ontario. Vous vous souviendrez sans doute que c'est notre gouvernement, cette administration, qui enfin a eu le courage de mettre sur pied une politique d'équité d'emploi. Ils sont reconnus au même titre que les autochtones, les personnes ayant un handicap, les membres des minorités raciales et les femmes.

Comme vous le savez, un comité interministériel de sous-ministres adjoints a été mis sur pied pour se pencher sur la question de la discrimination telle qu'elle s'applique aux francophones. Le comité présentera son rapport au Conseil des ministres au début de l'année prochaine.

À ce propos, le Caucus francophone pour l'équité en



emploi dans la fonction publique de l'Ontario, un des groupes de référence constitués sous les auspices du secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, a tenu trois forums au printemps de 1993 pour les fonctionnaires francophones. Les recommandations adoptées au cours de ces rencontres aideront le gouvernement à maintenir ses engagements vis-à-vis l'équité d'emploi pour les francophones au sein de la fonction publique ontarienne.

L'Office des affaires francophones collabore aussi très activement aux initiatives gouvernementales pour la prévention des agressions sexuelles. En collaboration avec la Direction générale de la condition féminine de l'Ontario, une somme de 291 474 \$ a permis aux organismes francophones d'entreprendre un certain nombre d'initiatives visant à sensibiliser davantage la communauté à cette question. On a aussi alloué des fonds à neuf centres d'aide aux victimes d'agression sexuelle afin de préparer et de mettre sur pied des services en français dans leurs aires de recrutement.

L'objectif de ce projet, entrepris en collaboration avec la direction générale de la Condition féminine de l'Ontario et le ministère du Solliciteur général et des Services correctionnels, est d'assurer que les femmes francophones qui ont survécu à une agression sexuelle aient accès à une gamme complète de services en français.

Relations avec les minorités ethnoculturelles de langue française de l'Ontario : Comme je l'ai mentionné plus tôt, la composition de la communauté francophone a changé au cours des dernières années avec l'arrivée de minorités ethnoculturelles de langue française en provenance de partout dans le monde.

Depuis quelques années, l'Office des affaires francophones s'est efforcé, dans le cadre de son mandat, de rejoindre les minorités ethniques de langue française. L'Office voulait ainsi évaluer leurs besoins et leur offrir des conseils et un soutien financier pour les aider à élaborer des structures et des projets qui répondent à leurs préoccupations particulières.

En février 1993, l'Office des affaires francophones a organisé une séance d'information à l'intention des groupes communautaires ethnoculturels de langue française. Cette séance d'une journée, tenue ici à Toronto, a mis en présence des partenaires des gouvernements fédéral et provincial. L'objectif de cette activité était de préciser et de clarifier les mandats respectifs, les services en français et les programmes de financement des différents ministères provinciaux et fédéraux.

En outre, le directeur général de l'Office des affaires francophones est membre du comité des sous-ministres sur l'antiracisme et du réseau des sous-ministres adjoints chargés de l'antiracisme. De plus, l'Office a un représentant au sein du comité de coordination interministérielle sur le rapport Stephen Lewis, afin de garantir que les francophones soient inclus et ciblés dans toutes les initiatives entourant la stratégie antiraciste de l'Ontario.

Les minorités ethnoculturelles francophones sont également représentées à la table ronde du Conseil des ministres sur l'antiracisme.

Les sourds et malentendants francophones : Enfin, afin d'assurer l'égalité de traitement et de faciliter l'intégra-

tion des francophones malentendants dans la société ontarienne, l'Office des affaires francophones, en collaboration avec le ministère des Affaires civiles et le Secrétariat d'État du gouvernement fédéral, a parrainé une évaluation des besoins et a offert des fonds à la nouvelle Association des sourds.

**Economic development:** Francophones are affected by economic development issues, of course.

**Agriculture and food:** A key achievement in the area of agriculture is the proposed legislation on stable funding for general farm organizations. Bill 42, as it is also known, allows for the allocation of a portion of farm organization fees to a francophone farm organization, the Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens, a step that will help promote the development of a francophone agricultural community.

**Cultural centres and arts services organizations:** The government of Ontario has also adopted some measures that have been beneficial to the francophone cultural and artistic milieu. In this regard, we have acted on recommendations outlined in the Grisé report, *RSVP! Keys to the Future*. The minister's advisory committee, which I co-chair with my colleague the Minister of Culture and Communications, supported the establishment of a \$300,000 funding program for francophone cultural centres and increased funding for arts services organizations. The office contributed some \$80,000 towards the program for cultural centres. Indeed, the cultural centres program was the only new program created by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation in 1993-94.

**Francophone community radio stations:** The government of Ontario is aware that greater access to French-language radio communication is essential to Ontario's francophone community. That is why the office has supported the establishment of French-language community radio stations in the past and why the Jobs Ontario Community Action program has invested a total of \$170,000 to help establish two new stations, one in Kapuskasing and the other, of course, in Cornwall-Alexandria.

I intend to continue to work with my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to ensure that new and existing francophone community radio stations have access to adequate financial support.

I am becoming, with respect, more and more cognizant of the need to adhere religiously to the half-hour allocation. With your permission, I will accelerate so it becomes a matter of record. I may beg your indulgence, with a dozen or so pages left, that in order to respect—and I mean every word of it—the convention, the protocol, if I could avail myself of your courtesy to remit the text so it becomes part of Hansard, with the acquiescence and unanimity that characterize my colleagues from the opposition, I might be two or three minutes over.

**The Chair:** Minister, I've seen your notes. You're going to be a good 10 to 12 minutes over and that's fine by this committee. The thought of you doing this presentation any faster concerns me.

**Mr Noble Villeneuve (S-D-G & East Grenville):** We have an auctioneer back here.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** A sentiment I share.

**Mr Grandmaître:** Translators are still on page 2.

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**The Chair:** It would be the ruling of the Chair to allow the minister to complete his remarks. He is allocated half an hour for his response to his two critics, any time overage will be adjusted and that's quite comfortable. Please, Minister, complete your comments for the benefit of the committee and Hansard. Thank you.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you very kindly.

Jobs Ontario Community Action: Jobs Ontario Community Action also included francophones among its definition of communities of common interests, bonds. Francophones were identified among the economically disadvantaged or marginalized groups, communities of interest targeted by the community investment share corporations program.

The Office of Francophone Affairs will be consulted on and will review all projects submitted by francophone community groups within the framework of Jobs Ontario Community Action.

Caisses populaires cooperative movement: In the business field, a key organization in Ontario's francophone business community is the *Chambre économique de l'Ontario*. This organization works to promote the economic interests of francophones and the economic development of the province through contacts with its national and international francophone business network.

In addition, we have the *caisses populaires*, francophone credit unions. These cooperative institutions, which I might add just celebrated their 80th anniversary, contribute significantly to the economic and cultural development of the francophone community. There are 60 *caisses populaires* in Ontario representing over \$1.4 billion in assets. They have 250,000 members and employ some 800 people.

The Ministry of Finance is currently considering amendments to the *Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act*, which would enable the *caisses populaires* to play a larger and more active role in the economic development of Ontario's francophone community.

The *caisses* are expected to play an important part as financial lending institutions in the development and implementation of community investment share corporations and community loan funds.

Education and training: One of the more traditional areas of interest for francophones has been education and training.

French-language education: As you know, in April 1933, the Ontario government established the Royal Commission on Learning. It will examine and make recommendations on a broad range of education reform issues, including models for French-language education governance. The commission is to report its findings by the end of 1994.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Education and Training is considering interim initiatives and amendments to enhance the mandate and powers of French-

language sections of school boards.

French-language college initiative: The recently announced French-language college initiative is one that will greatly benefit Ontario's francophone community. In my view, training and retraining are vital in a recession and can only benefit the entire economy.

In the case of francophones, we know that their participation rate in post-secondary programs is half of that non-francophones. Although bilingual colleges contributed to the development of French-language college programs in Ontario, a 24% decline in francophone enrolments at the college level between 1983 and 1988 clearly indicates that these colleges did not—I repeat did not—resolve the problem of low francophone participation rates.

On the other hand, enrolment figures at *la Cité collégiale*, Ontario's first French-language college, have far exceeded initial projections. During the college's first year of operation in 1990-91, it was expected that the enrolment of 1,925 students would increase to some 2,670 students by 1994-95. In reality, approximately 2,200 students registered at *la Cité* in 1990, in its first year of operation. This was followed by 2,438 registrations in 1991, an increase of 10.8%. Even more remarkable is the fact that new projections forecast future enrolments of approximately 4,250 students.

Therefore, in July 1993, despite the shortfall in federal funding, the Ontario government announced the creation of two new French-language colleges and the building of a permanent campus for *la Cité collégiale*.

The northern college will have its main campus in Sudbury; the other, which will serve central and south-western Ontario, will be based on a "college without walls" concept, relying on other delivery methods such as distance education technologies.

Ontario Training and Adjustment Board: The Ontario Training and Adjustment Board Act, 1993, came into force on September 1, 1993. Francophones have been identified as a labour market partner and are represented on OTAB's governing body.

As an agency of the Ontario government, OTAB falls under the requirements of the French Language Services Act. In the designated areas of the province, services to the public will be offered in both English and French.

No acquired rights or services for the francophone community will be lost or diminished in a transfer of responsibility for delivery of services.

Ministry of Transportation: Finally, if I might switch to my other—

**Mr Villeneuve:** Who is the minister?

**Mr Grandmaître:** Yes, who is the minister?

**The Chair:** You'll all have your time when it comes to you, but the minister still has the chair.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you very kindly, Mr Chairman. We're talking about a very important subject matter, and may I remind my distinguished colleague that humour is not always becoming.

Finally, if I might switch to my other portfolio of Transportation for a moment, I'm pleased to report that



bilingual highway signage is progressing as planned. More than 90% of provincial highways in designated areas, including the municipality of Metro Toronto and the cities of Hamilton and Mississauga, will have the required bilingual signs by December 1993.

**Mr Grandmaitre:** Great move.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Our government does not subscribe to the unilingual signage policy adopted in the sister and neighbouring province of Quebec.

The rest is expected to be completed in 1994, in accordance with the ministry's compliance plan.

L'Office des affaires francophones : Au cours de la dernière année, l'Office des affaires francophones a suivi de très près les questions suivantes, dans la mesure où elles ont eu un impact sur la prestation des services en français.

Ressources humaines : Dans le domaine des ressources humaines, entre 6 % et 7 % des postes de la fonction publique de l'Ontario doivent offrir des services en français dans les 22 régions désignées de la province. À la fin de 1992, 74 % de ces postes étaient comblés par des personnes capables de s'adresser en français à leur clientèle.

Bien sûr, il y a quelques petites exemptions. L'Office des affaires francophones surveille aussi les exemptions accordées sous la Loi sur les services en français.

En novembre dernier, le lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil a renouvelé pour cinq ans l'exemption concernant la traduction en français des documents scientifiques, techniques et de recherche ainsi que des ouvrages d'érudition.

Répercussions de la restructuration du gouvernement : La restructuration du gouvernement et l'évolution de notre milieu économique et technologique ont transformé la façon dont chacun fait des affaires. L'Office des affaires francophones se tient au courant de ces changements et travaille avec les coordonnateurs et coordonnatrices des services en français, les ministères et les organismes de coordination. Ensemble, ils veillent à ce qu'il ne se perde aucun droit acquis, ni service en français, par suite de la création de nouveaux partenariats ou du partage, du transfert ou de l'échange de responsabilité en ce qui a trait à la prestation des services.

L'Office des affaires francophones a également travaillé en étroite collaboration avec le secrétariat du Conseil de gestion. Il a publié avec son aide, une trousse destinée à aider les gestionnaires et les coordonnateurs à évaluer les meilleurs moyens d'offrir les services en français dans les nouveaux ministères après leur réaménagement ou leur intégration.

L'Office et le Secrétariat ont aussi publié un document visant à clarifier quels sont les droits de supplantation des employés inscrits sur la liste des employés excédentaires par rapport aux postes désignés.

Les mesures que je viens de décrire sont des exemples de la surveillance constante qu'exerce l'Office des affaires francophones dans toute la fonction publique. Elles illustrent notre détermination à veiller à ce que les services en français continuent d'être accessibles aux francophones de l'Ontario.

Coordonnateurs et coordonnatrices des services en français : L'Office travaille toujours avec les coordonnateurs et les coordonnatrices des services en français et les appuie. Comme vous le savez, ces personnes jouent un rôle important car elles sont le lien clé entre leur ministère et la communauté francophone. Ces personnes fournissent des conseils aux cadres supérieurs et agissent comme mandataires des sous-ministres dans le domaine des services en français et des affaires francophones.

En raison des changements auxquels procède le gouvernement, les chefs de service leur demandent leur avis sur les meilleurs moyens de poursuivre la prestation des services en français.

Tournées régionales dans la communauté francophone : L'Office des affaires francophones maintient lui aussi des liens étroits avec la communauté francophone. Depuis 1991, l'Office a entrepris dix tournées régionales dans la communauté francophone. Ces tournées ont permis à l'Office d'obtenir l'avis des membres de la communauté francophone, bien sûr, sur la prestation de leurs services en français.

D'après certaines des 1200 feuilles d'évaluation que nous avons reçues, 66 %, donc les deux tiers des francophones rencontrés pendant les tournées, ont demandé des services en français et la moitié, 50 %, se sont déclarés satisfaits des services qu'ils reçoivent en français ; 40 % des personnes qui ignoraient l'existence de la Loi sur les services en français ont dit qu'après ces rencontres, elles demanderaient à être servies en français la prochaine fois qu'elles auraient à traiter avec le gouvernement provincial.

Campagnes de publipostage : C'est le besoin de trouver de nouvelles façons de communiquer avec ses clients francophones qui a amené l'Office à développer des campagnes de publipostage pour atteindre les communautés francophones situées hors des grandes concentrations de la population.

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En envoyant un bulletin personnalisé de format tabloïd aux ménages francophones et en leur demandant de préciser les services en français qu'ils utilisaient, l'Office a pu établir une communication plus interactive avec certains de ses clients. Cet exercice a aussi permis à l'Office de créer une base de données à jour sur la communauté francophone, ainsi que d'accroître le tirage de son bulletin d'information Coup d'oeil, At a Glance, un format tabloïd.

Fonds de soutien à la communauté : L'Office des affaires francophones gère aussi un fonds de soutien à la communauté. Ce fonds permet à l'Office des affaires francophones d'appuyer des initiatives de développement communautaire conformes aux priorités du gouvernement de l'Ontario. Une partie des fonds est consacrée à des projets innovateurs élaborés par des organismes communautaires, bien sûr sans but lucratif.

L'Office des affaires francophones évalue chaque projet d'après les priorités en matière de dépenses que j'établis avant le début de chaque exercice.

En 1992-93, une somme totale de 907 000 \$ a été allouée à 72 projets dans toute la province. Durant la



même période, les groupes ethnoculturels francophones ont reçu des subventions qui ont totalisé 67 865 \$.

Protocole d'entente Canada-Ontario sur la promotion des langues officielles : Enfin, l'Office des affaires francophones coordonne la participation de l'Ontario au Protocole d'entente Canada-Ontario sur la promotion des langues officielles. Ce Protocole, renégocié avec succès pour cinq ans, soit de 1993 à 1998, permettra aux deux gouvernements de financer conjointement les projets ministériels visant à répondre aux besoins de la communauté francophone.

À la suite de l'élection d'hier, nous sommes enfin certains que tous les partis élus à la Chambre des communes se feront un devoir et un honneur de participer et d'appuyer ce projet d'entente qui vient tout juste d'être négocié.

Dans le contexte de la Loi sur les services en français, les priorités de l'Office au cours des cinq prochaines années aux termes de ce Protocole comprennent notamment : (1) des projets ministériels étalés sur plusieurs années que les deux gouvernements avaient déjà approuvés ; (2) des projets ministériels qui présentent un intérêt particulier pour la communauté qui vont stimuler son développement ; (3) des projets ministériels qui portent sur des initiatives antiracistes au sein de la communauté francophone ; et (4) des projets ministériels qui mettent l'accent sur les besoins de personnes dans la communauté qui sont traditionnellement isolées et vulnérables, les personnes qui en ont le plus besoin.

Pour l'exercice 1993-94, l'Ontario a présenté 26 projets, émanant de neuf ministères, dont le coût total est de 2.8 millions de dollars. Ce coût sera partagé de manière égale avec le gouvernement fédéral, notre partenaire.

Conclusion : Pour terminer, aux Affaires francophones, la priorité clé que je me suis donnée est de protéger les droits de notre communauté, de cette communauté francophone de l'Ontario. J'aimerais remercier mes collègues du gouvernement pour leur appui, mes partenaires communautaires pour leur intérêt sincère, pour les activités du gouvernement qui ont un impact réel sur les services en français.

En ces temps difficiles mais non impossibles où tout change et où tout tourne rapidement, ce que nous devons reconnaître, nous tous, c'est que la prestation des services en français est un phénomène continu et aussi un phénomène évolutif. Bien que le rapport que je viens de vous soumettre indique que nous avons réalisé de grands progrès, nous sommes tous conscients individuellement et, plus important pour cette collectivité, collectivement, qu'il y a encore beaucoup de chemin à faire.

À titre de ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, je m'engage à continuer, à travailler pour accroître constamment l'accessibilité à des services dans notre langue, des services en français universellement, partout, partout dans le gouvernement. C'est un droit pour les Franco-Ontariens. Je demande donc la collaboration des partenaires, des autres gouvernements, des communautés, des individus.

J'ai maintenant le plaisir de répondre à toutes les questions que les membres de votre Comité et vous-

même pourriez avoir l'amabilité de me poser. Je vous remercie, Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, membres de l'Office des affaires francophones.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. You've used up about 40 minutes, according to my calculations, but we'll now proceed to up to 30 minutes for Mr Grandmaître.

**M. Grandmaître :** Sûrement, je n'ai pas l'intention de prendre les 30 minutes qui me sont allouées. Par contre, aussi rapidement que le ministre parle, j'ai tenté de dresser une liste de questions. Peut-être qu'on devrait procéder aux questions au lieu de présenter un préambule.

Je comprends la difficulté de votre Office et je comprends très bien vos responsabilités. Puis, encore une fois j'entends le ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones terminer sa présentation en disant, «Nous avons encore une fois beaucoup de chemin à faire.» Je me souviens, en 1986, 1987, 1988, qu'on répétait toujours la même chose : on a beaucoup de chemin à faire.

Par contre, si on veut aboutir à quelque chose, si on veut enfin arriver à la fin de ce chemin-là, cette route-là, il faut constamment améliorer la prestation des services en français. Comme vous l'avez dit, Monsieur le Ministre, c'est votre responsabilité et la responsabilité de l'Office des affaires francophones.

Dans mon temps, si je peux référer dans mon temps, on parlait de 22 régions désignées. J'ai reçu beaucoup de lettres d'organismes et même de municipalités qui étaient intéressés à être désignés, qui ont produit, si vous voulez, des chiffres des faits à l'appui pour qu'ils soient considérés. Je crois que j'ai reçu sept ou huit lettres de Kingston et les Îles. Ces gens-là me disent très ouvertement que le Ministre ne répond pas à leurs lettres, que le Ministre ne répond pas à leurs demandes, que le Ministre n'offre pas de mot, aucun commentaire et qu'il dit simplement, «C'est à l'étude.»

Alors, ma première question : combien de temps est-ce que ça prend pour étudier ou évaluer la demande d'une région ou d'un organisme qui veut être désigné ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Mes collègues de l'Office des affaires francophones m'assurent que je réponds aux lettres. Naturellement, c'est un sujet sérieux. Quand on parle de désigner une nouvelle région, bien sûr il y a des critères à remplir, des chiffres à atteindre. Comme critère de base, on se penche sur les dernières données du recensement, ce recensement qui a lieu à tous les cinq ans. Le dernier recensement indique que la région de Kingston ne remplit pas les critères. Donc, la région, en vertu des critères, si on s'attache aux critères, aux conditions d'entrée, ne peut être respectée même si on comptait —

**M. Grandmaître :** Vous avez répondu à ces gens-là en leur disant qu'ils ne rencontraient pas les critères ?

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**L'hon M. Pouliot :** J'ai été au-delà. J'ai rencontré ces gens-là. Je leur ai fait part personnellement qu'ils ne rencontraient pas les critères, même si on pouvait aller chercher ceux qui évoluent quotidiennement, dans la région de Kingston, en-dedans des murs. Puis on me dit qu'ils sont là pour au moins deux ans, que même ras sol

le chiffre ne rencontre pas les critères établis.

Vous savez, il s'agit d'être raisonnable. On essaie, en pourvoyeurs de services, d'accommoder le plus de gens possibles, mais quand même il faut aussi avoir une consistance, un sérieux à l'appui. On espère que si ce ne sera pas pour demain, ce sera dans un avenir rapproché. Je leur ai fait part non seulement des critères mais des bons souhaits du gouvernement en vertu de leur désir d'en arriver à les remplir.

**M. Grandmaître :** L'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario me dit que les gens de Kingston maintenant — il faut que je prenne votre parole et la parole de l'Office — rencontrent les critères. Alors, est-ce que Kingston et les Îles n'emploient pas les mêmes critères que vous venez d'énoncer ? Pourquoi ces gens de l'ACFO diraient-ils qu'ils rencontrent les critères ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je vais demander à M. Beauregard de répéter en d'autres mots ce que je viens de vous confier.

**M. Rémy Beauregard :** La question se pose non seulement par rapport au nombre d'individus mais aussi par rapport au territoire qui est couvert. Vous vous rappellerez que lors de l'entrée en vigueur de la Loi sur les services en français, on avait déterminé à l'époque que les critères de base seraient soit qu'une région était désignée avant l'entrée en vigueur, soit qu'une région urbaine avait 5000 personnes, soit qu'une région semi-urbaine ou semi-rurale ou totalement rurale avait 10 % de la population.

Or, quand on regarde la situation de la ville de Kingston, la municipalité qui est la région urbaine ne rencontre pas le critère de 5000. Quand on ajoute à la ville de Kingston les comtés ruraux environnants, on n'arrive pas à 10 %. Alors, évidemment la difficulté dans le cas de Kingston, c'est de faire un amalgame de régions urbaines, de régions semi-rurales et d'arriver avec un territoire qui de toute façon ne correspond à rien, juste y additionner des gens. À ce rythme-là, on aurait pu désigner tout l'est de l'Ontario à partir de Peterborough jusqu'à la frontière du Québec. Évidemment, relativement par là, ça aurait été difficile à gérer. C'est pour ça que les critères ont été fixés comme ils l'ont été en 1986, et tout ce qu'on a fait, c'est appliquer les mêmes critères à la situation de Kingston.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, vous direz, Monsieur le Directeur, que ces gens-là sont satisfaits.

**M. Beauregard :** Mais, écoutez, ça c'est une autre question.

**M. Grandmaître :** Oui, c'est ma deuxième question.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Juste une supplémentaire : écoutez.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, j'ai posé la question.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je vais être franc avec vous —

**The Chair :** One at a time, gentlemen. First of all, the questions will be directed through the Chair. Secondly, this is Mr Grandmaître's time, so it is customary and courteous to make the responses within a reasonable length of time. It's Mr Grandmaître's half-hour to use as he chooses but we would prefer that this be an orderly

debate. If that's how you choose to order your half-hour, Mr Grandmaître, but please, one speaker at a time and through the Chair. Thank you.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, si je peux continuer avec mes questions, je pense que j'ai reçu une réponse à ma première question, qui cause des doutes.

Maintenant, si on pense aux fameux programmes, aux coupures budgétaires, aux restrictions budgétaires, je vois qu'en 1992-93, les coupures à votre budget étaient de l'ordre de 807 300 \$. Le pourcentage est de 19 %. Quel autre ministère a été coupé de 19 % ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** La question est judicieuse. On peut parler de deux choses. Quand on parle de chiffres, on parle soit en pourcentage ou on parle en dollars.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je parle de vos chiffres.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui, d'accord.

**M. Grandmaître :** Vos chiffres.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Laissez-moi répondre.

Le ministère du Travail, lui, a été coupé de quelque 23 %, ce qui est une fiche énorme. Comme vous le savez, nous avons beaucoup souffert des transferts, des argentés qui émanent ou qui reviennent à la province de l'Ontario du gouvernement fédéral.

Sur ce, nous sommes confiants qu'avec la décision qui a été prise hier, les argentés vont commencer à nous parvenir de façon plus juste. Ce n'était pas le cas dans le passé, donc on a eu quand même à prendre ces responsabilités financières. Ça n'a pas été facile. Personne, à ma connaissance, ne s'est vraiment senti ciblé. On n'a pas coupé quelqu'un au dépens d'un autre. C'est simplement que, à cause du manque de deniers publics, du manque d'argent de transfert de l'administration précédente à celle d'hier soir, l'Ontario n'a pas reçu sa part des choses.

Donc, on a dû oeuvrer seul et ça n'a pas été facile, mais on a continué à appliquer les argentés. Il s'agissait d'être plus judicieux, de faire des choix difficiles, mais nous avons continué, dans l'ensemble, nos programmes. Il faut dire aussi qu'on nous avait laissé, et ça tout candide, dans le pétrin quand même.

**M. Grandmaître :** Quel budget ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Non, c'est-à-dire que, quand nous avons changé d'administration, la décision du peuple, ce jour fatidique du 6 septembre, 1990 —

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Président.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** En guise de réponse, c'est que non.

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Président.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous me demandez une question. Il y a un pourquoi de ces choses-là et c'est qu'on n'avait pas les deniers publics qu'on nous avait dit qu'on avait.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je parle du budget de 1992-93, et je demande au Ministre de répondre aux questions que je lui pose. En 1992-93, vous avez eu des coupures de 807 000 \$. Alors, est-ce que c'est trop difficile de vous poser cette question-là sans radoter, «En 1989-90» ? Je peux vous rappeler des choses aussi de 1985.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est dommage. Beaucoup de ministères — dans nos coupures, personne n'a été



épargné mais je ne veux pas vous provoquer.

**M. Grandmaître :** Simplement une explication.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Non, non. Je ne veux pas vous provoquer mais avant d'en arriver en 1992, il a fallu passer par 1990.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je vous pose la question de 1992-93 ; répondez à la question. Vous n'en êtes pas capable.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que je pourrais poser la question au directeur, qui semble être très au courant de ce qui se passe ? Son Ministre a besoin d'un bon briefing. Pourriez-vous, Monsieur le Directeur, m'expliquer les coupures de 800 000 \$ dans le budget de 1992-93 ? Pourriez-vous me dire où ont été faits les coupures ?

**M. Beauregard :** Il y a un certain nombre de secteurs, évidemment, qui ont été affectés par des coupures. Par exemple, dans la façon dont ont fait les campagnes d'information auprès de la communauté francophone, on met davantage l'accent sur les campagnes d'information communautaire plutôt que sur les campagnes d'information des grands médias. Vous vous rappelez qu'à un moment donné, on faisait la promotion des services en français en utilisant la radio et la télévision et maintenant on fait davantage de travail auprès de la communauté.

Aussi, comme le disait le Ministre tantôt dans sa présentation, il y a beaucoup plus d'intervention directement auprès de la communauté, soit par des tournées communautaires ou par des campagnes de publi-postage tout simplement parce que ça nous permet d'aller rejoindre les foyers francophones directement chez eux.

Le Ministre a expliqué aussi qu'on avait coupé un poste, celui d'agent des plaintes. Évidemment, la formation de notre personnel, par l'utilisation des ordinateurs, nous permet de faire beaucoup plus de travail à l'interne alors que précédemment on était obligé d'aller à l'externe, dans des entreprises de communication, pour faire des choses comme notre rapport annuel.

**M. Grandmaître :** Encore au directeur, maintenant que cette personne-là, que ce poste-là a été coupé, pourriez-vous m'expliquer ce qu'il se passe maintenant avec les plaintes ? De quelle façon est-ce que les plaintes sont —

**M. Beauregard :** On reçoit toujours les plaintes, sauf que plutôt que d'avoir une personne qui est préposée uniquement à ce dossier-là, il y a quatre analystes à la direction des services aux ministères qui ont maintenant la responsabilité, dans chacun de leur secteur d'activités, de répondre aux plaintes qui relèvent des ministères dont ils ont la responsabilité.

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**M. Grandmaître :** Est-ce que vous avez plus de plaintes ? Est-ce que vous recevez, on va dire dans les deux dernières années — le nombre de plaintes.

**M. Beauregard :** Le nombre de plaintes a effectivement diminué au cours des deux dernières années. L'an passé, il était à 176 ; l'année d'avant, il était autour de 230 ; cette année, il se maintient à peu près au même nombre.

**M. Grandmaître :** J'ai reçu beaucoup de plaintes, surtout dans ma région, lorsque le plan d'implantation du

ministère des Transports a été appliqué avec l'affichage bilingue. Je crois que notre région est maintenant complétée, et en Chambre j'entendais des gens qui se plaignaient des députés qui déposaient des pétitions contre l'affichage bilingue.

Alors, je me souviens que votre Ministère avait trois ans pour mettre en marche le programme d'affichage. Vous avez répondu aux demandes. Qu'est-ce que le Ministère fait quand on se fait bombarder, si je peux employer le mot « bombarder », par ce genre de pétitions-là ? De quelles façons est-ce qu'on répond à ces gens-là ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** La première chose que j'ai faite en ma qualité de ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, c'est que je me suis chargé de communiquer immédiatement et directement avec le ministre des Transports. Je n'ai pas eu à aller bien loin. C'est un type fort sympathique.

**M. Grandmaître :** Est-ce que vous avez donné un briefing au Ministre ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Absolument, à l'aide d'un miroir, mais on aurait espéré que le miroir reflète un peu avant de renvoyer l'image. Sérieusement, c'est qu'on s'est servi de beaucoup de choses. C'est un contexte délicat. Vous savez, à chaque fois qu'on demande où qu'on amène un changement sur la place publique, il faut renseigner les gens pour que les gens ne soient pas surpris parce que c'est un changement, un changement dans ce cas-ci au code imposé, si vous voulez, en vertu des statuts aux motoristes.

On s'est servi de l'opportunité qui s'offrait dans notre échéancier de remplacement parce que, comme toutes choses, il y a de l'usage. Donc, on s'est dit que, dans les régions désignées, si on était pour de toute façon changer l'affichage, sous les auspices de la Loi 22, maintenant on va le faire de façon bilingue.

Aussi, en même temps, l'occasion se présentait d'aller un peu plus loin, de rendre ça encore plus simple en vertu de cette nouvelle démographie que l'on observe au quotidien. Les gens viennent de partout, ils nous paient le compliment de leur visite en permanence et ils s'établissent de plus en plus en grand nombre en Ontario. Donc on a dit aussi, non seulement l'affichage bilingue, mais prendre l'opportunité de l'affichage international, si on veut, ou le symbole. De mise, ça semble plaire à peu près à tout le monde. On s'est servi de ça. On n'a pas vu notre rôle comme étant défensif.

La grande majorité des questions, à notre avis, était basée sur la curiosité et émanait de gens bien pensants qui voulaient simplement savoir, parce que vous savez que les temps sont difficiles, « Où vont mes impôts, comme citoyen et citoyenne, comme contribuable ? »

Donc on a su procéder, et maintenant nous sommes heureux de vous soumettre que plus de 90 % du projet est complété. Les gens, bien sûr, étant fort conscients de la situation économique actuelle, le sont donc — qu'on ne nous demande pas d'enlever ou de remplacer ces affiches bilingues, parce que les citoyens et citoyennes sont fort conscients du coût d'érection, donc du coût de déménagement etc. Le projet est à peu près complété.

Les gens ont été vigilants. Ils ont été sympathiques,



dans l'ensemble. Vous savez, ça n'a pas coûté beaucoup aux Transports, me dit-on. Nous avions un budget de 2,7 milliards de dollars. L'affichage chez nous aux Transports, ça nous concerne, ça nous connaît. On le fait depuis longtemps. Quand je dis que nous avions 2,7 milliards, c'est que le budget n'est plus de 2,7 milliards. Il a été diminué à cause des contraintes, comme tous les autres ministères aussi.

**M. Grandmaître :** La fonction publique, je crois que vous avez mentionné tantôt, dans vos commentaires, dans le préambule — est-ce que j'ai mal entendu lorsque vous avez mentionné que présentement, dans la fonction publique, le nombre de francophones se chiffrait entre 6 % et 7 % ? Est-ce que j'ai mal compris ?

**M. Beauregard :** C'est ça.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Non, vous savez, vous avez très bien compris.

**M. Grandmaître :** C'est 6 % à 7 % ? Alors, il y a eu une diminution de francophones au sein de la fonction publique.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Une diminution, mais si on comptait les têtes, il y aurait plus de monde à la messe. Mais on a grandi l'église, donc les bancs semblent moins bien remplis.

**M. Grandmaître :** Surtout s'il y a un sermon qui —

**M. Pouliot :** Mais non. Écoutez, ce n'est pas la préparation de votre sermon qui risque de nous embêter.

**M. Grandmaître :** Répondez à ma question, ou je pourrais reposer la question. Je pense que le directeur connaît beaucoup mieux son budget que le Ministre. C'est une bonne chose qu'on a ce genre de directeur-là à l'Office. Monsieur le Directeur, on a eu, certainement, une diminution à la fonction publique. Je parle du nombre de francophones. Le nombre de francophones a diminué durant les trois dernières années.

**M. Beauregard :** Globalement, le nombre de francophones n'a pas diminué à l'intérieur de la fonction publique et n'a pas augmenté de façon significative depuis 1989.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, vous me dites qu'en 1989, lorsqu'il y avait 8 % tout près de —

**M. Beauregard :** On ne s'est jamais rendus à 8 %.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non ?

**M. Beauregard :** Le maximum qu'on a atteint a été de 7,3 %. Évidemment, il y a une fluctuation qui va arriver, compte tenu du fait que d'abord la taille de la fonction publique a diminué en général pour la province de l'Ontario. Chaque fois qu'on fait une évaluation des gens dans la fonction publique, évidemment on est obligé de choisir une date.

Le troisième facteur aussi, et on le sait, par rapport à l'ensemble de la fonction publique pour toutes les catégories des groupes d'équité, c'est que c'est les gens qui choisissent de se désigner comme francophones, comme femmes ou comme personnes handicapées ; il n'y a aucune obligation. On sait qu'il y a un pourcentage qu'on a de la difficulté à évaluer, bien sûr, de gens qui, quand ils complètent ce questionnaire-là, ne s'identifient d'aucune façon. C'est un choix personnel.

Alors, quand on dit qu'à l'intérieur de la fonction publique ontarienne, le nombre de francophones se situe entre 6 % et 7 %, on laisse justement cette marge de manoeuvre pour refléter le fait qu'il y a des gens qui choisissent de ne s'identifier dans aucune des catégories d'équité. Ça, on ne peut pas forcer les gens.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, je comprends bien ça. Mais vous me dites que le plus haut pourcentage qu'on a jamais atteint depuis la Loi 8 — je parle du nombre de fonctionnaires non francophones — n'a jamais dépassé 7,3 %.

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**M. Beauregard :** Le chiffre le plus élevé que j'ai vu, de gens qui avaient choisi de s'identifier comme francophones, je pense que c'était de 7,3 %. Maintenant, il faut faire attention, Monsieur Grandmaître, de ne pas faire le lien nécessairement entre les postes désignés à l'intérieur de la fonction publique, qui sont une chose, et le nombre de francophones qui s'y trouvent, qui est une autre chose.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien. Je voudrais passer peut-être aux communications, surtout aux services aux députés. Si on parle des gens d'Ottawa-Carleton, on parle de huit membres dans l'opposition qui exigent recevoir des communiqués de presse bilingues.

Je m'aperçois que pas de temps à autres mais presque toujours, on reçoit le communiqué de presse d'un ministre ou d'un ministre en anglais et peut-être une semaine après, quatre ou cinq jours après, on reçoit la même communication en français.

Moi, j'ai une question à poser. Est-ce qu'il serait possible que les députés qui veulent s'identifier, qui veulent recevoir ce communiqué de presse-là en même temps que le communiqué de presse unilingue anglais, pour la simple raison que plusieurs de nos commettants nous posent des questions concernant les communiqués de presses ministériels, reçoivent ce service-là le même jour ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est tout à fait logique et raisonnable. Comptez sur moi. Si ça ne se fait pas, ça devrait et ça va se faire. Écoutez, ce que vous dites est plein de bon sens. Donc, j'en prends note et immédiatement, je communique avec mes collègues pour que le processus devienne le quotidien. Merci.

**M. Grandmaître :** Une autre question, les groupes ethniques francophones : Parlez-moi des groupes ethniques francophones. De quelle façon est-ce que le mariage se fait entre l'Office, l'ACFO, les groupes ethniques francophones et tous ces gens-là ? Quelle sorte de mariage ? Je me souviens que le mariage n'était pas tellement bon à un certain moment donné, mais par contre peut-être qu'il s'est amélioré.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui. C'est une situation souvent difficile. Il est difficile d'accueillir des minorités quand nous aussi sommes des minorités. Vous savez, personne n'est à l'abri. On part d'un milieu où nous sommes des gens de souche ou de source.

Au début du texte, quand on s'identifiait on disait que, même aujourd'hui, de ces plus de 550 000 Franco-Ontariens, plusieurs sont ici de génération en génération depuis 350 ans. Il y a un phénomène relativement

nouveau — de là votre question — qu'il vient s'y rajouter des Laotiens, des Cambodgiens, des Vietnamiens, aller de là à l'Afrique du Nord, en plus grand nombre.

Mais tenez, j'étais la semaine dernière l'invité du gouvernement fédéral de l'île Maurice, au deuxième Sommet de la francophonie, cette grande famille francophone. Là-bas, il y avait 47 pays où le français est la langue d'usage. Ça ne veut pas nécessairement dire que c'est la langue officielle ou une des langues officielles mais où le français est langue d'usage.

Donc cette mosaïque, cette démographie, ces 47 pays, eux, regardent le Canada de la façon dont on devrait se regarder, mais c'est avec envie. Ils nous voient comme privilégiés. Ils veulent s'établir ici dans le contexte des politiques d'immigration actuelles et sa contingence, où les chiffres vont chercher dans les 250 000. Il est tout à fait normal, étant donné que les groupes de tradition, d'antan, d'hier, les groupes antérieurs sont de moins en moins représentés à l'ensemble de la politique d'immigration.

Donc, nous avons de plus en plus cette réflexion de la carte géographique mondiale, dans ce monde devenant de plus en plus petit. Ce n'est pas facile. Le rôle de l'Office c'est d'intégrer. C'est que, chez vous, je me sens chez nous quand j'arrive de Somalie. Ce qui nous tient, notre lien, c'est comme l'air qu'on respire un peu, c'est la langue, c'est la francophonie, qu'on vienne de partout, qu'on soit de Tunisie, du Maroc en passant par ses voisins, qu'on vienne d'Égypte.

Ce n'est pas facile, mais de plus en plus on commence à réussir. La question judicieuse, en vertu d'étaler ce défi-là, on a beaucoup de chemin à faire aussi mais on y parvient. Les gens sont de plus en plus conscients, s'acceptent, apprennent à se connaître, communiquent de mieux en mieux.

Aux Affaires francophones, c'est peut-être le sujet le plus intéressant. On se fait un devoir de communiquer parce que la chance nous est donnée assez souvent de dire aux gens : «Écoutez, c'est là qu'est la force. C'est là qu'est l'avenir.»

C'est peut-être l'occasion, sinon l'occasion rêvée, la plus réelle d'aider la francophonie, de participer, de reconnaître l'état de choses comme il est et d'inviter des gens dans la famille francophone.

Je vous dis comme ça, sans être précis à votre question, mais nous en sommes fort conscients. Ça nous tient vraiment à coeur. J'ai dit souvent comme ça que si on ne parvenait à rien d'autre, Monsieur Grandmaître, c'est ça qui est la dimension humaine. Mais, plus que ça, on a l'opportunité, à travers notre francophonie, de dire, «Écoute, chez nous, t'es chez vous,» d'aller au-delà. Il ne faudrait pas manquer cette opportunité.

C'est en donnant qu'on reçoit. Ce n'est vraiment pas plus malin que ça. Si on ne fait rien d'autre, on fait ça. C'est reconnaître l'évidence même, et à chaque fois qu'on le fait, on se donne l'assurance que par temps difficiles, on aura toujours la possibilité de puiser en dedans de soi-même et encore de perpétuer, d'offrir aux autres toujours en recommençant.

Nous sommes descendus dans la rue. On a multiplié

les rencontres avec ceux qui en ont moins, les plus vulnérables. Je parle des gens qui sont marginalisés, des femmes somaliennes.

**Le Président :** Merci, Monsieur le Ministre.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Non, non. Entre autres, je vais vous laisser avec ça, avec tout ce que ça veut dire, un pays de l'Afrique centrale, vous savez. Ils viennent ici pour regarder l'avenir avec un peu plus de confiance, où ils ne parlent pas la langue, où la devise est étrangère ; ils n'ont pas la même couleur de peau. Si on réussissait un peu à les écouter et à les aider, c'est notre société, c'est le genre humain, c'est la dimension humaine à son meilleur vécu. Donc, on en profite. C'est la question que j'aime le mieux de chez vous. Moi, ça me prouve que vous comprenez et que vous aussi mettez l'épaule à la roue.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je peux passer à une autre question, Monsieur le Président ? C'est terminé ?

**The Chair :** It was up five minutes ago.

**M. Grandmaître :** Vous avez été très généreux.

**The Chair :** I was with the minister's response.

**M. Grandmaître :** Est-ce que ça veut dire que j'ai autant de temps que le Ministre ?

**The Chair :** Unfortunately, your half-hour expired four and a half to five minutes ago.

I will recognize Mr Villeneuve, then the minister will have about 10 minutes to do any summary comments and then we'll go into rotation for questions and answers.

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**M. Villeneuve :** Merci bien, Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Ministre, personnel. C'est toujours un plaisir de discuter des budgets de l'Office des affaires francophones. Puis, Monsieur le Président, pour vous, je veux aussi vous féliciter. Je sais que vous suivez des cours de français très régulièrement. Alors, en étant président d'un comité comme celui-ci, peut-être que vous allez pouvoir éviter quelques cours et puis en gagner considérablement.

**Le Président :** D'accord.

**M. Villeneuve :** Premièrement, j'ai quelques questions, mais je vais être obligé de m'absenter vers 5 h 10 pour prendre le fauteuil du président dans l'Assemblée législative. Mais on reviendra certainement demain.

L'Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens apprécie énormément le fait que votre ministère leur a fourni un financement spécial dans le projet de loi sur le financement des organismes agricoles. Plus exactement, voici le seul journal, la seule revue agricole d'expression française en Ontario. Ce financement aide la publication du journal Agricom, qui dessert la région de Prescott, Russell, Glengarry, Stormont, le nord et le sud-ouest ontariens. Alors, c'est très important pour que nos cultivateurs soient bel et bien à point sur les nouveautés dans leur domaine d'agriculture.

Deuxièmement, j'aimerais vous mettre peut-être à l'écoute d'un petit problème qui se pose, comme je l'ai appris hier : la fermeture d'un bureau de tourisme bilingue sur la 401, dans la voie ouest qui longe la frontière Ontario-Québec. C'est un bureau de tourisme très important même si le bureau va être fermé pour



l'automne, l'hiver et le printemps. La saison du tourisme, le bureau va être ouvert. Mais par contre, on me dit, et je n'ai pas eu l'occasion de vérifier les statistiques, que c'est un bureau de tourisme avec un projet pilote qui peut faire les arrangements pour chambres d'hôtel dans la province pour les touristes qui arrivent en Ontario et se présentent à ce bureau de tourisme-là.

C'est du bon capitalisme en autant qu'il y a une ristourne de 10 % qui revient à ce bureau-là. Pour le mois de mai l'année dernière, on me dit que leur revenu brut, tout simplement pour faire les arrangements avec les hôtels, qu'ils soient à Kingston, à Cornwall, à Belleville ou à Toronto, s'est élevé au-delà de 2000 \$.

Je crois que le ministère de la Culture, du Tourisme et des Loisirs ainsi que vous-même devriez être au courant de ce projet pilote-là qui dessert nos visiteurs touristiques qui ont besoin d'être guidés. Ça m'a intrigué, et puis le fait que le bureau va maintenant être fermé pour la saison plus au moins lente qui est du mois d'octobre au mois d'avril. On va peut-être en parler plus longuement, mais j'aimerais avoir vos commentaires, s'il y aurait moyen de parler à votre collègue Anne Swarbrick simplement pour essayer de lui expliquer que c'est très important d'avoir le bureau touristique aux frontières Ontario-Québec bel et bien ouvert quand les gens en ont besoin.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Une question en point. Cela nous est non seulement familier, à ma collègue M<sup>me</sup> Swarbrick et moi, mais nous sommes tout à fait en faveur d'un système d'entreprise privée. Notre gouvernement s'est donné comme mandat de préconiser l'entreprise privée. On reconnaît les valeurs à l'échelle du marché surtout quand la compétition y est de mise.

Ce qui se produit dans ces cas-ci, fort malheureusement, et je vous invite à partager ce qui suit, c'est que nous sommes le 26 octobre et la saison du tourisme tire à sa fin. Vous êtes d'accord avec moi que nous vivons une certaine saturation concernant les taxes, les impôts perçus dans les poches des contribuables. Donc l'angoisse, le dilemme est simplement ceci : c'est d'un côté offrir les services que les gens préconisent, que les gens désirent avoir, et puis tout simplement essayer de rencontrer ces exigences avec les impôts des contribuables.

Je ne sais pas si chez vous, Monsieur Villeneuve, dans votre philosophie, il est permis de dire, «Écoutez, il faut faire des choix difficiles.» Notre administration, le gouvernement actuel, a choisi de ne pas imposer outre mesure des impôts. On comprend qu'il y a une limite d'aller chercher ces deniers publics dans la poche des contribuables, que les gens commencent un peu à être saturés.

C'est un choix difficile mais pas plus difficile que ça. C'est un service. De là à voir, est-ce que c'est un service essentiel, c'est un des choix difficiles. Il a fallu se tenir debout. Mais c'est un choix qu'on a fait, donc ça va se produire en saison.

Par contre, si ces gens qui ont à cœur l'entreprise privée — tout simplement si on trouvait un capitaliste, mais surtout un capitaliste avec le capital — ils seraient prêts à donner leurs services de façon continue. En conscience, on se devrait, comme administration, d'analyser dans tous ces détails toutes les possibilités. Si vous

connaissiez quelqu'un, on vous invite à nous le faire parvenir. On entre en communication avec lui, puis l'entreprise privée, on se doit de faire ça en conscience parce que nous aussi croyons que l'initiative, les énergies de ces gens bien-pensants peuvent servir le public en général.

Mais ce qui nous concerne dans les temps qui courent, c'est que ça ne paie pas. On n'a pas un moyen de le faire, donc on ferme ça l'hiver, on attend le printemps puis on ouvre ça à la grande pour renseigner tout le monde. Mais on ne va pas le faire douze mois par année sans aller chercher d'autre argent dans vos poches, M. Villeneuve, une situation que vous comprenez trop bien.

**M. Villeneuve :** Absolument, nous le comprenons très bien, mais je veux que vous compreniez la situation, qui est un projet pilote. Je n'ai pas les statistiques. Je crois que le mois de mai, qui a été le premier mois du projet pilote, le bureau de tourisme situé à l'entrée, en l'Ontario, du Québec a fait un revenu brut d'au-delà de 2000 \$. On me dit que ça continue raisonnablement bien puis qu'on attend cet hiver, dans la saison plus ou moins morte, encore un revenu assez intéressant. Le projet pilote se continue.

Alors, j'admire votre ministère. On nous dit que vous avez réduit votre budget de 19 % sans réduire l'efficacité de desservir les besoins de la francophonie. Est-ce que je vous ai bien entendu ? Je vous ai bien entendu. C'est admirable. C'est même fantastique. Mais ici on regarde une situation où il y a des possibilités que ce bureau de tourisme pourrait se maintenir financièrement sans aller chercher des deniers, des taxes du public.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** M. Villeneuve, seulement nous deux ici — depuis 1985, vous m'avez toujours paru comme un type sympathique. Vu qu'on parle d'un cas particulier, d'un projet pilote, d'un ministère autre que celui des Affaires francophones et des Transports, je vais m'informer. Je vais aller au fond de l'affaire parce que, vous savez, quand on dit en oïdi-ère, souvent — pas que je vous questionne, mais quand on ne sait pas, on cherche, on demande. Là, on va chercher les chiffres.

**1700**

Naturellement, s'il y a un moyen de joindre les deux bouts, de permettre une ou des possibilités d'emploi et qu'en plus on pourrait servir le public à l'année longue, ça pourrait peut-être s'arranger. Mais laissez-moi, dans les plus brefs délais, vous revenir avec les données que le ministère responsable devrait nous fournir ensemble. Vous êtes d'accord ?

**M. Villeneuve :** Je suis bien d'accord. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai abordé le sujet, parce que dans le moment, sur la 417, à l'entrée Ontario-Québec, nous avons un bureau de tourisme aussi qui bel et bien ferme durant la saison lente et qui est ouvert du mois d'avril au mois d'octobre. Nous n'avons pas de gros problèmes avec ça parce que c'est tout simplement une voie qui va de Montréal à Ottawa ; vous me direz que certains gens qui continuent vers le nord ontarien vont se servir ce cette route-là.

Mais par contre, la route certainement la plus occupée est bel et bien la 401. Je crois qu'à l'entrée de l'Ontario,



la province qui a 10 millions d'habitants et qui est le moteur de l'économie, il serait important d'avoir quelqu'un à ce bureau-là.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Ça a du bon sens. Êtes-vous au courant où les bureaux touristiques semblent abonder ? Nous, on procède de façon un peu différente en Ontario. Est-ce qu'au Québec, sur la même route, les bureaux touristiques sont ouverts ? Je ne sais pas.

**M. Villeneuve :** Oui, ils sont ouverts parce qu'il y a beaucoup de ski qui se fait au Québec et ce sont des situations où les gens font leurs arrangements pour visiter le pays de la neige. Alors, nous avons un pays de la neige aussi, mais peut-être pas tout à fait aussi considérable qu'à certains endroits au Québec.

Mais je reviens encore — j'ai eu l'occasion vendredi dernier, avec mon collègue le député de Prescott et Russell, de visiter l'Hôpital pour enfants de l'Est de l'Ontario pour l'inauguration partielle de services francophones dans cet hôpital, et c'est admirable. Maintenant, encore une fois, nous parlons de petits enfants, assez souvent de jeunes gens qui ont besoin de services médicaux, qui ont été accidentés. Il est d'importance majeure qu'un hôpital comme l'Hôpital pour enfants de l'Est de l'Ontario, qui est dans une région désignée, desserve bel et bien sa clientèle qui vient d'une région entièrement désignée.

Alors, la désignation partielle est très importante, mais par contre il ne faut pas arrêter là, surtout à l'urgence. On me dit, et j'ai vérifié avec le personnel administratif, qu'ils ont toujours quelqu'un qui peut s'exprimer dans une des deux langues officielles sur place. Par contre, ils ne rencontrent pas les exigences du projet de loi.

Je crois que c'est important, surtout pour nos enfants qui sont accidentés, assez souvent à l'urgence, dans des situations très stressées, qu'ils puissent s'exprimer, ainsi que leurs parents, dans la langue dans laquelle ils sont confortables.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Monsieur Villeneuve, on apprécie à sa pleine valeur qu'ici aujourd'hui, vous vous prononciez au nom des enfants. Écoutez, même si le service n'était pas rendu à sa pleine valeur, c'est que —

**M. Villeneuve :** Le ministre de l'Éducation s'est prononcé au nom des enfants aussi.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Nous sommes désarmés, d'accord ? Écoutez, on s'en occupe. Je voudrais vous informer aussi — on vient de me donner une note, parce que là je sais que vous voulez du précis, vous qui avez une méthodologie qui est quand même assidue. Vous avez bien préparé vos questions. Je sens aussi que dans les derniers jours —

**M. Villeneuve :** Le beurre est épais là.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est une qualité qui souvent se perd, hein ? Nous avons déjà quatorze hôpitaux désignés, Monsieur Villeneuve, et encore là, vous allez nous permettre, nous sommes fiers que nous en sommes à quatorze hôpitaux désignés...

**M. Grandmaître :** Si on attend assez longtemps, on en aura un quinzième.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Avant de procéder à une désigna-

tion, il faut s'assurer que tous les services sont en place. C'est une question sérieuse. Vous le faites à partir de l'enfance. On essaie d'accélérer le processus. Mais pour bien faire les choses, avant de désigner, on n'arrive pas comme ça, comme vous le savez fort bien. Ce n'est pas comme du café instantané, voyez-vous. Ça, vous le savez. Nous, on se dit : «Écoutez, quatorze hôpitaux désignés, mais il y a du travail à faire. Il y a du boulot.» On se met un échéancier. On dit le début, le milieu, la fin du projet, mais que ça soit fait de façon impeccable. Et là, on a pignon sur rue. C'est la grande ouverture, mais on sait fort bien que tout a été mis en oeuvre pour que les services qui sont offerts soient vraiment déjà sur place avant l'ouverture officielle. Donc, on y procède.

**M. Villeneuve :** Une autre question, ensuite je vais être obligé de m'absenter. Nous avons eu une petite controverse ici au mois de mai de cette année, 1993, au sujet des services de santé en français dans la ville d'Alexandria, où il y a une dame qui, d'après elle, a été refusée pour la simple raison qu'elle avait parlé anglais.

Ça a créé une frustration assez considérable au sein de la communauté. Ça a fait de la publicité aussi, et M. Roland Beaulieu, le directeur du Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie, a exprimé bel et bien qu'il rencontrerait les exigences. Mais par contre, il faut toujours se souvenir que ce sont des deniers publics qu'on dépense. Ça crée un problème. Je crois que je ne suis pas obligé de vous expliquer le négatif que ça peut déclencher. Ça a déclenché beaucoup de négatif.

Maintenant, il semblerait que le personnel à cette clinique pouvait bel et bien s'exprimer dans les deux langues, qui est certainement quelque chose d'important. Mais par contre, quelqu'un a refusé de donner les services à quelqu'un qui s'était exprimé en anglais à l'appareil téléphonique.

Alors, j'aimerais s'il y avait moyen de s'organiser pour qu'on puisse rencontrer les exigences sans imposer sur nos centres de santé francophones, mais par contre, ce serait tellement plus facile à rendre.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous êtes gentil et généreux ; vous ne me demandez pas de commenter sur ce cas particulier.

**M. Villeneuve :** Vous êtes certainement libre de le faire, Monsieur le Ministre.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Supposément. Vous savez qu'en mon humble qualité de ministre, souvent je connais en surface ou par ouï-dire—

*Interjection.*

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Écoutez, ouï-dire, oui, que M. Beauregard pourrait peut-être donner un peu plus de lumière sur ce sujet particulier, sur cette dame, parce qu'avec les jours et la charge de travail, c'est qu'on ne peut pas, fort malheureusement, se pencher sur tous les cas qui se présentent à nous. Bien entendu, chaque cas, à juste titre, mérite toute l'attention qu'on se permet, mais les derniers mois ont été particulièrement chargés chez nous. Comme M. Grandmaître l'a si bien souligné, c'est que notre gouvernement veut tant faire. Donc, en somme, en conclusion, je laisse M. Beauregard se pencher sur ce problème.

**M. Beauregard :** Je pense qu'effectivement, comme vous l'avez mentionné et comme des gens du centre de santé l'ont reconnu, il y a eu un problème de communication avec le client. Le Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie est un centre de santé communautaire qui a été mis sur pied pour desservir d'abord la communauté francophone, parce qu'on sait que les services de santé en français dans la région étaient presque inexistants. Les deux hôpitaux de Cornwall sont très peu équipés pour donner des services en français, alors on a mis sur pied le Centre.

Comme, évidemment, ce sont des deniers publics, on ne refuse personne. Je pense que le sens de la communication, c'était de dire : «Si vous venez ici, vous venez dans un centre de santé en français et notre documentation et nos procédures sont en français, mais si vous voulez rencontrer un médecin, bien sûr qu'il va vous parler en anglais. On ne refuse pas de soigner les gens.»

Ça a donné l'impression, à un moment donné, aussi d'une tempête qu'on a continué à activer pendant quelques jours, mais le ministère de la Santé et le conseil d'administration et la direction du Centre, je pense, ont donné les explications qu'il faut.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que, comme nous, vous avez vu aussi dans les journaux des gens qui ont écrit pour dire qu'ils s'opposaient à ce qu'il y ait un centre de santé de langue française. On ne peut rien y faire, mais bien sûr on va continuer à travailler pour desservir tous les gens.

**The Chair:** Excuse me. The members will realize we're being called to the House for a vote. I believe it's a five-minute bell. This committee stands adjourned and will reconvene after the vote has been taken.

The committee adjourned at 1710.









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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**\*Chair / Président:** Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South/-Sud PC)

**Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

Abel, Donald (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

**\*Bisson, Gilles** (Cochrane South/-Sud N)

Carr, Gary (Oakville South/-Sud PC)

Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

**\*Haeck, Christel** (St Catharines-Brock ND)

**\*Hayes, Pat** (Essex-Kent ND)

**\*Lessard, Wayne** (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

**\*Wiseman, Jim** (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Grandmaître, Bernard (Ottawa East/-Est L) for Mr Elston

Villeneuve, Noble (S-D-G & East Grenville/S-D-G & Grenville-Est PC) for Mr Arnott

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia





## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 2 November 1993

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 2 novembre 1993

Standing committee on  
estimates

Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses

Office of Francophone Affairs

Office des affaires francophones

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Cameron Jackson  
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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 2 November 1993

The committee met at 1538 in room 151.

OFFICE DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES

OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We have reconvened to continue with the examination of the estimates 1993-94 for the Office of Francophone Affairs.

When we were last together, Mr Villeneuve, the PC critic, had completed his time allocation and we can move to the governing party. However, I must advise at this point that Mr Villeneuve has sustained a small accident and he is incapacitated today and will be unable to be with us. I know that he's done some damage to his knee and he's in a bit of pain. He expresses his regrets and he knows that the door to the minister's office is always open and he can continue his dialogue, but the Chair felt that we should proceed today. With that understanding, are there any questions from Mr Hayes?

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** Sure, I always have a question.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** And then I have one after you.

**The Chair:** Before we begin, I just wanted to indicate that there was some sense of agreement that we might be able to complete the estimates today. Mr Arnott will be in the chair for the balance of estimates today and by mutual agreement there's some support for completing the estimates for this office by 6 o'clock today. There will be a vote at about five to 6 and if there are no difficulties with that, as always, the Chair is in the hands of the committee but I believe there's some consensus on that point.

**Mr Hayes:** I hope the minister appreciates this as a hypothetical type of question. With the political atmosphere in this country and what's happening in Quebec—and I'm very serious about this—with people talking about Quebec separating, I'd just like to know your opinion on how you feel about the things we are trying to do for the francophones here in Ontario. What kind of effect would this have on some of our endeavours or our goals to meet the needs of the francophones in the education system and the judicial system and many other areas? Could you comment on that?

**Hon Gilles Pouliot (Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs):** Thank you for your question and of course for your consistency in speaking from the heart, speaking with candour. Of course, the question is insightful. It's also very timely by virtue of the times that we live in. We have statutes, we have laws, we have a law in the province of Ontario that guarantees that the Franco-Ontarian population of 550,000, if it lives, if it resides or does business in designated areas, if it does business with the government, that is, it is getting services en français, services in French.

French is not an official language of the province, as

you know, although Franco-Ontarians have a privileged place in terms of receiving services; that is in the same jurisdiction in Ontario. We operate independently of what happens elsewhere in this context alone. Of course we're very cognizant. We know our responsibilities and we go at it alone, but we need the cooperation, the understanding and at times a little compassion to bring our agenda forward.

By this I mean that it's much better to enter a system, to make progress in that system if you don't have to operate defensively, if you don't have to, for instance, speak French in a lower voice as if it were a secret language, that if you're confident in yourself, you know your ability and have recognition around you that you are one of two official languages in this country and that in the province of Ontario, in our province, people are kind and generous and they know that the law of the land here in Ontario entails that you are entitled, it's a right, not a privilege, a right to have French as a language of service.

Again, and I will conclude with this, I appeal constantly to people to be understanding, for other people are understanding, everyone vis-à-vis one another. A sign of things to come is that we live in a very fascinating world, a smaller world of course, where the challenges of tomorrow will be reflected in our ability to deal with individuals. It's the human dimension and you find it when you look at your neighbour and you're really in essence looking at yourself. It's a mirror, it's a reflection and that's what makes a society. We're determined to keep doing what's right. It's difficult at times. From time to time it's a little more difficult, but it also fuels our resilience that we go forward. I thank you for the question.

**Mr Hayes:** To be more blunt—

**The Chair:** Did you want a fuller answer to that, Mr Hayes?

**Mr Hayes:** No, I just want a lot shorter answer than that. Really what I want to hear from you, Mr Minister, is that the initiatives we are taking here in this province dealing with francophone affairs, regardless of what happens, will not be impeded by whatever decision is made in Quebec.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** What a coincidence. The question couldn't be more timely. Other administrations have talked a good deal about it but at noon today we announced the formation of two more colleges where education will be entirely in French. We have one at present. It's la Cité collégiale in Ottawa. It's a community college. We had invited everybody by saying if you're a francophone, if you're not necessarily a francophone but if you wish to take all your courses in French, we have a community college, the first one in Ontario. We had anticipated some 2,000 people who pay taxes as well, just the same as anybody else, and we ended up getting closer to 6,000 applicants. Then word got out and the



word got around, so we've announced a second French-language community college for northern Ontario and a third one for south, southwestern Ontario to sort of start blanketing the province and respond to the needs of the Franco-Ontarian community.

I think it's \$142 million but we have a good partner, the federal government, the past administration. The past administration acquiesced. They recognized the need. Sure, we would have wished to get more money.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** The new one will double that.

**Mr Wiseman:** Did you catch that on Hansard?

**Mr Hayes:** I want to make sure, Mr Minister—

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** That's one thing we're doing, but that's education, education, education.

**Mr Hayes:** I want to make sure that Mr Grandmaître had made a commitment on behalf of the federal government that it will double the funding in Ontario. I hope that he strongly pursues that on behalf of the Franco-Ontarians. Thank you, Mr Minister. You want to still continue with our goals that we have set.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Yes.

**Mr Hayes:** That's what I wanted to know.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** With our goals, and we're lobbying with the government. But you realize that of course I cannot commit any federal administration, for we are very much aware of our jurisdiction.

**Mr Hayes:** With the help of Mr Grandmaître we'll get it.

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Président, est-ce que je peux poser une question additionnelle concernant la même question de mon collègue ?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Is this a crossover or a supplementary?

**The Chair:** It's a supplementary. In the spirit of generosity, if you can get a supplementary out of that question, you go right ahead.

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Ministre, vous venez de nous annoncer que votre gouvernement venait de faire une déclaration, que le ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation venait de faire une déclaration concernant les deux collèges. Vu le fait que le comité n'a pas été informé de cette annonce-là, pourriez-vous nous en dire un peu plus long ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Plus précisément, on a désigné les conseils des deux collèges, donc à l'extérieur, 12 membres des communautés touchées pour le nord et en plus 12 membres pour le sud, sud-ouest aussi, donc 24 gens bien-pensants qui vont siéger sur ces collèges.

**M. Grandmaître :** Vous avez signé l'entente aujourd'hui avec le fédéral ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Bien, l'entente avec le fédéral, il y a quelques mois. Ça s'est passé lorsque nous avions un gouvernement différent de celui-ci.

**M. Grandmaître :** C'est encore le même gouvernement.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui, c'est encore le même gouvernement puisque le prochain n'a pas encore été

assermenté. Je crois que ça va se produire jeudi.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Grandmaître, I sense you want to pursue this in a little more detail but it might be helpful for the minister if you could get a copy of today's announcement and a communiqué to the committee. It's more a courtesy than it is anything else but it would be nice.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Je n'ai pas besoin de l'indiquer au Ministre ; je pense qu'on connaît tous, y inclus les membres du comité, les députés de l'opposition, qu'on se trouve dans un temps pas mal intéressant faisant affaire avec la réalité fiscale dans laquelle on se trouve dans la province de l'Ontario, comme toute autre province à travers le pays.

Je vous demande une question : il y a beaucoup d'attentes de la part des communautés francophones à travers la province de l'Ontario pour établir une gamme de services dont on a besoin dans la province. On parle comme telle de radio communautaire. On sait qu'il y a nombre de demandes de radio communautaire à travers la province des régions qui n'ont pas de radio francophone pour desservir ces populations-là. On sait qu'il y a nombre de centres médico-sociaux à travers la province, encore dans le bout du sud-ouest, dans le bout de Timmins, dans le bout de Kapuskasing, dans différentes places partout dans la province pour desservir notre population francophone. On sait qu'il y a encore beaucoup de demandes faisant affaire avec les garderies francophones. Je souligne que juste dernièrement, cet été on a ouvert une nouvelle garderie francophone pour la communauté de Timmins, la première garderie francophone à but non lucratif dans l'histoire de la communauté de Timmins.

**1550**

Tout ce que j'essaie de dire c'est qu'il y a beaucoup de demandes de la part des groupes francophones, de la francophonie de l'Ontario comme tout autre groupe dans la province, pour des services. Comment est-ce qu'on répond à ces besoins-là dans ce temps fiscal dans lequel on se trouve aujourd'hui ? Qu'est-ce qu'on dit à la communauté francophone quand on sait qu'elle veut qu'on avance dix milles, mais c'est possible de faire seulement deux ou trois milles faisant affaire avec le système fiscal ? Qu'est-ce qu'on dit ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez parfaitement raison ; vous répondez dans votre sagesse coutumière. Vous énoncez les besoins de la communauté. Donc, dans certains cas, je vais être franc avec vous, c'est de l'étapisme. À peu près toujours, on aimerait aller plus rapidement et répondre peut-être, sûrement si c'était possible, du jour au lendemain aux attentes légitimes de la communauté francophone.

Maintenant, les temps sont difficiles mais les temps, à la francophonie, ne sont pas impossibles. Nous, on a un mandat horizontal. Nous ne sommes pas un ministère avec portefeuille. Mais c'est qu'on va voir les ministères de pointe et on leur dirait, «Écoutez, vous, ministère de la Santé, on vous demanderait d'aller chercher, à travers votre expertise, à travers votre budget, les outils nécessaires pour répondre aux attentes des personnes dans les régions désignées.»

Vous allez me permettre, j'ai un peu de problème ; j'ai travaillé trop longtemps, le vrai travail, celui d'un mineur, de demander à M. Beauregard : si M. Beauregard faisait partie de mon personnel politique, il continuerait à tourner les pages comme il fait là, et il retournerait dans la rue pour cogner aux portes pour encore six mois et à chaque porte il donnerait de la littérature au nom du Nouveau Parti démocratique.

**M. Bisson :** Écoute, il le ferait avec le cœur.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** J'essaie de saisir votre question, de parler un peu, mais par contre, vous me donnez toutes sortes de bonnes informations.

On continue à progresser. Dans certains cas, c'est de l'étapisme ; dans d'autres cas, toujours en dedans de la Loi 22, on va toujours de l'avant. Il y a une évolution. On a de plus en plus de services. Les gens en demandent de plus en plus. Nous, on essaie de répondre en dedans de la responsabilité fiscale avec les argentés qu'on a. Jusqu'à maintenant, on a été capables de trouver quand même certains argentés nécessaires pour continuer à aller de l'avant, non dans un domaine mais dans tous les domaines, sur tous les dossiers.

**M. Bisson :** Merci. Je pense qu'il y avait une question. There was a question on the part of one of my counterparts.

**Mr Wiseman :** I don't know where my question is going to go but we'll give it a try. You indicated that the francophone community was approximately 500,000 in Ontario. What would you say is an indicator of how much tax they pay in the province in a year?

**Mr Grandmaître :** As much as everybody else.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Beaucoup.

**Mr Wiseman :** If you follow where I'm going on this, I think you may agree where I may wind up. Have you any estimation of the amount of taxes? I've got a rough guess.

**Hon Mr Pouliot :** How much tax does the francophone community pay? In most cases they wish they could pay more. By this I mean that on the average, if you're a francophone in Ontario, you make slightly less money than the average Ontarian. Furthermore, if you're a francophone woman in Ontario, not only do you make less money than the average non-francophone woman, working of course, but you make substantially less. In fact, the disparity is more pronounced, more noticeable than it is but by and large, in terms of the statutes, in terms of the taxes that you must pay for the money you make, you pay no more and you pay no less. You're a citizen at par. With governments, if there's an opportunity to pay taxes, they make sure you're a citizen at par.

**Mr Grandmaître :** Especially if you're an NDP government; they tax you.

**Mr Wiseman :** I think the people who hold the record on increasing taxes in Ontario are the Liberals.

**Hon Mr Pouliot :** In terms of taxes, let's set the record straight here. Taxes were introduced as a temporary measure and this was done by the Liberals, certainly not by the New Democratic Party.

**Mr Grandmaître :** Back in 1913.

**Mr Wiseman :** No it wasn't; it was 1917. Come on, your history is as bad as the Leader of the Opposition's.

**Mr Grandmaître :** You were there in 1917; I wasn't.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott) :** Order.

**Mr Wiseman :** I agree with you that I'd love to pay a really high amount of taxes because that would mean I actually have the income to pay it, so I understand your point.

**Mr Bisson :** Most people think that they do.

**Hon Mr Pouliot :** That's a profound statement, sir.

**Mr Wiseman :** But the point I'm trying to make is that if the francophone community is roughly 6% of the population and it contributes on an equal basis, it's roughly \$2.5 to \$3 billion in taxes a year if you're taking it as a community. The point I'm trying to make is that so often people forget. They see money being spent on signs or something like that or they see money spent on a college and they forget that the community actually contributes a large amount of money to the general coffers as well and that one should look at having some kind of presence within the society for that kind of investment.

**Hon Mr Pouliot :** The point is totally accurate. There isn't much, with respect, that I would wish to add to it. It's common sense. In my opinion, it speaks for itself. By way of an example, if you have 1,000 people who wish to go to school, it matters little what school they go through because generally speaking you will have to educate people. It's compulsory; it's mandatory. If the opportunity is given to do so in one of the two official languages, again the money comes back. It's an essential service that you provide for two groups in society; I'm talking about federally.

At the provincial level, some provinces have opted to do it under special legislation. This is where Ontario comes in. If you are in a designated area, you have access to services in French, if you so wish, and you are encouraged to do so as well. But let's face it; if you go to a Ministry of Transportation office, if the person is able to understand and answer your queries in both English and French, you're still only paying one salary, so it's no added cost to the taxpayers of Ontario. We have to be cognizant and we have to take advantage of every opportunity not to duplicate, if you wish, not to run a parallel economy; we're not saying this. What we're saying is that yes, you do have a place under the statutes and you have the obligation to make the services available and we're doing just that.

**Mr Wiseman :** Just to talk a little bit about this parallel economy and not to have one, it seems to me that with the world going in terms of global markets, one of the very large strengths the Ontario economy has is the multidiversity of languages and skills that we have available to our use. Have we any idea of any kind of economic advantage that we're gaining from having the ability to perhaps communicate and send people to different parts of the world to communicate directly with the various linguistic groups? I think the French language is spoken in the second- or third-greatest number of countries of the world.



**Hon Mr Pouliot:** The question is insightful. Let's look at the United Nations, this body that really represents the world. It is the body. It doesn't represent everyone but it certainly represents most people on this planet. More than one quarter of the membership of the United Nations uses French as a language. It may not be an official language. French is used as a language in no less than 47 countries in this world. We could go with the three theatres of Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam. Not that many people are aware that French is used as a language and it's used every day by many people. You have North Africa, you go to the Middle East, needless to say many countries in Europe, and then you venture into North America. In every section of the world you will have people, sometimes blocs of countries, where French is of usage. People use it and it's in 47 different countries in the world.

What does it mean in terms of communication? What does it mean in terms of dollars in pocket? What does it mean in terms of wealth? It's the ability, in some cases through a culture, through a language, to get along, to get to know the opportunity to bridge country to country, people to people, to do some interfacing. It's impossible to evaluate the richness, how much wealth is being created as the world gets smaller and smaller by way of using a culture and in this case a language as a common denominator. It's all positive. It's benefits, benefits, benefits. That's the way the world is going.

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I've never met, to my knowledge, a person who has been penalized because he or she played too many instruments of music. Music is a communicator as well. We only reap benefits from it. You can never speak too many languages. I haven't met a person who spoke too many. I've only met people who wished they spoke more and more because what better way to communicate with someone, whether you do it in Swahili if you're in Nairobi, whether you speak Romansh and you can reach that 1% of the population in Switzerland, whether you speak Creole, Hindi or Mandarin?

English is an official language. French is a language more often spoken in Mauritius, for instance. What a wonderful world indeed. It's done by way of culture, by way of language. In this case it's a win-win situation. It's rich. For some people, for 550,000 Ontarians, it's the way they breathe; it's the way they see themselves. Oh, they're not saying, "Vive la différence," but as they draw from within, as they communicate with their own and with others, it is something they're so proud of.

**Mr Wiseman:** I have one more question. I think most people would know the British Commonwealth of Nations and they would identify with that. I don't think as many people know about la francophonie. What I would like to know is, what connection do you have with that association on behalf of the francophones of Ontario? If you have any connections, since I don't know and that's why I'm asking the question, what kinds of connections or what kind of association do you think there might be in the future given that there are so many possible benefiting results that could flow from that kind of association?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** I say if not humbly, certainly simply, this Minister of Transportation with responsibility for francophone affairs will die poor. So I have no connection but I have some associations.

Let me tell you a true story that happened—oh sure, it was paid by the federal government—when I was asked to represent, to serve the province at the Sommet de la francophonie, the francophone summit. The francophone summit is a meeting, a gathering of people from those 47 countries. They gather every two years for a period of about five days. M. Grandmaitre represented the province in his capacity as minister responsible for francophone affairs when the Liberal Party formed the government, before we did.

It was on a day like today—it's only a few weeks back—and I took Air Mauritius because Air Mauritius is the national airline. Not too many airlines fly to Mauritius; it's really not that big. I flew from Paris to Frankfurt, just to stop over a few hours, and then to Mauritius. I was sitting in my seat and the seat beside me was vacant until someone arrived, he said, "Excuse me," and he occupied the seat.

Let's keep in mind that it's a 12-hour flight, so you have time to chat. This person was M. Mobido. He was from Mali, but he now lives in France, representing the interests of African-front countries. As you know, about half the African countries have French as the official language or as the main language.

We got chatting and he said to me: "Minister, I will make sure that I introduce you to people from Africa when we get to Mauritius. I know all the heads of state in Africa, all the presidents and the prime ministers." So I said to myself, wait and see, but if he says so, it's probably true.

Once we got to Mauritius, a car came and picked me up to go to a plush hotel, if you wish, where the heads of state were staying. We were not staying at those plush hotels because obviously we're not heads of state and we had no reason to stay in those expensive hotels.

**Mr Bisson:** But you would have liked to.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** So in the small lobby of our hotel, the driver picked me up and he brought me over to the Royal Palm Hotel. This is a nice hotel. I met the president of the People's Republic of Congo, one on one. I was honoured. I was a little nervous. I don't meet heads of state often, for sure.

He wanted to talk about roads. There was a road going to Gabon and it would be a shame if it were to stop in Gabon. He knew that Ontario had a lot of expertise on roads and he was wondering about the possibility of having some contracts. He's going to send me all the details. He was talking about infrastructure.

I went back to the lobby and I met the Prime Minister of Togo. Sure, they have a little difficulty raising funds. It's a true story. I went back to the hotel and I met the European authority on high-speed rail. Well, I couldn't believe my good fortune.

So you're right. Sometimes it's direct, sometimes it's planned and other times, like in this case, it's just spontaneous. People want to do business, so if you have



an opportunity to meet people and to reach them through whatever media, whatever form, it will come back to you in spadefuls. That's the way you do business, quite often. So those relationships I hope will last a lifetime. They're likely to do so because as people, as the succession takes place, there will be somebody else, the contacts will have been established and you do more and more business.

The world is getting so much smaller and it belongs to all of us. We're resource-based, we're expertise-based and our obligation to ourselves, if we are to stay prosperous, is to share that expertise. We have to sell that expertise to those who look at our system and are envious. They look at us the way we should look at ourselves more often because really that's half the battle. We are so highly regarded, so well regarded as a tolerant society, as a progressive society with open frontiers, and the people who live within those frontiers represent all the aspirations not only inside the walls, inside our own jurisdictions, but serve as a proud example to others to follow, and they're more than willing and more able to do that every day.

**Mr Wiseman:** Just as a last question, and it came out of what you were saying: Do we benefit internationally from the view that Canadians, and in particular Ontarians, are a tolerant society? Do we benefit from that from the point of view of trade and the point of view of interaction and perhaps some really tangible results? I know there are intangible results in terms of the world view of Canada as being one of the peaceful nations of the world, but I'm trying to dig just a little deeper in terms of the benefits to Ontario of having a ministry responsible for francophone affairs.

I think the people of Ontario want to hear, besides what's happening here in terms of defending culture and all of these things—this is very important—but I think they want to hear about the story you just told and perhaps the whole world view of Ontario as a tolerant place and a place that welcomes people from all over the world and a good place to relate to and to twin with and to be a place to do business and to have business done.

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**Hon Mr Pouliot:** We're all busy making a living. We all have our responsibilities. They start at the family unit. Our family members are our friends. Then they go on to the community and then they go on to the region, the province, the country, the world.

But we constantly need to be reminded in a positive way—it's almost all positive—the reality of Canada is 250,000 with the contingencies. I'm talking here about immigrants and some refugees. They total 250,000 per year. You have a base population of 28 million people in Canada. The average age of a Canadian is 33 years. The population of Mexico is 86 million people. The average age in Mexico is 23 years. The reason I mention those one-liners is that they're recent, they're accurate statistics. We are the size of a continent. We are a new country. We all came from someplace, that's true.

It has to be done sensibly though. I'm of the opinion that first you have a moral obligation, if you're rich, to help the less fortunate, that if we had two economies, if we had more consumers in Canada, we wouldn't be as

vulnerable to an export market as we are, at the whim of everybody else. We would be stronger. It would have to be done progressively, of course, and with the right focus on people who can offer services to other Canadians. If it weren't for immigration, being 33 years of age and quickly aging, in our ensemble as a population—we do not reproduce ourselves—the population would be declining. Not only would the population decline but the population would be aging as it declines at the same time.

Obviously, we have to recognize what is taking place. The real world says that the traditional sources of immigration, for instance, Western Europe, because of changing conditions, have ceased to make up the majority of people who come and establish themselves in Canada, come to reside, come to become Canadians like us in our country. Over the years we've seen a transition. What we've seen is more and more people from India, more and more people from Afghanistan, from Pakistan, from some North African countries, a few more Middle Eastern than before, more from Africa, a few more from South America but that's increasing, and the major part coming from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China, if you wish.

Consequently, we get more than 100 languages spoken in Ontario alone. Out of 250,000 in Ontario, the greater Metropolitan area will take in more than 50% of all immigrants. We now have a population of four million in Metropolitan Toronto. Within 15 years it's going to six million so we'd better be prepared.

But it's so challenging because each and every day we can experience new sounds, new smells, other cultures. What we're seeing inside the Metropolitan Toronto area is a reflection, a mosaic of the whole world right here at our very doorstep, and those people are becoming Canadians if they're not Canadians already. That is the reality of the world.

Someone once quipped to me and said, "Gilles, why don't you realize that within 200 years everyone will be speaking English?" I said, "Yes, but with respect, do I have the right to say that they'll all be speaking English but they'll all be Chinese?" It's recognizing in others the richness, the diversity. People have to integrate. English will continue to be the one language in Ontario.

**Mr Bisson:** The one or the—

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** No, the language for providing services for some time to come. That's the reality of the day. English is used as a turntable, as a common denominator for people of different cultures to communicate.

You have a responsibility to integrate in your country of adoption. But in the meantime, if you can keep what is you, you've achieved the best of both worlds, the best of three or four worlds. We are blessed, being a young country, systematically inviting people to come here and to join in our wealth. It started with all of us around the table. In some cases it started 400 years ago and then it accelerated in the 20th century.

We can all relate to an uncle, an aunt, a grandparent, a great-grandparent who came, in those days, from foreign lands. Today it is a six-hour trip and you can go from a total majority to an absolute minority. The world

is getting smaller. We have a responsibility to one another. The borders are less prominent or existent. They're something of yesteryears, if you wish.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister. M. Grandmaître.

**M. Grandmaître :** Peut-être que ma première question s'adresse aux municipalités de l'Ontario : il existait, et je crois qu'il existe encore, un programme qui assure aux municipalités qui veulent offrir des services en français un octroi, une subvention. Est-ce que ce programme existe encore ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui, ce programme existe encore. Je crois que c'est un programme que votre régime, que vous avez mis sur pied. On n'a rien changé parce que c'est un bon programme ; c'est rempli de bon sens. Oui, ça existe encore.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je reçois des lettres de certaines municipalités qui font partie du groupe des municipalités, l'Association francophone des municipalités de l'Ontario, je crois, qui disent, «On n'a rien reçu, absolument rien reçu du ministère des Affaires municipales pour l'année 1993, qui se termine très, très bientôt, en ce qui concerne les services en français au niveau municipal.»

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** On va examiner ça. Mais vous savez, Monsieur Grandmaître, il ne faut pas les garder seulement pour vous, ces lettres-là. Il ne faut pas les cacher ; il faut les faire parvenir. On n'est pas au courant mais on va s'occuper de ça.

**M. Grandmaître :** La lettre n'est pas adressée à moi. La lettre est adressée au gouvernement, pas à moi.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous recevez des lettres. D'accord. On va regarder ça, Monsieur Grandmaître.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je crois que vous avez reçu une copie de cette lettre-là adressée à l'honorable Ed Philip, ministre des Affaires municipales. Alors, pourriez-vous me dire combien de municipalités ont profité de ce programme-là en 1993 ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** On n'a pas cette information-là. Je vais communiquer avec mon collègue le ministre des Affaires municipales et on va, dans les plus brefs délais, vous donner une information.

**M. Grandmaître :** Mais en tant que vous êtes concerné, ce programme-là existe encore et le gouvernement n'a aucunement l'intention de changer d'idée ou de modifier le programme ou de diminuer les sommes affectées.

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**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je ne dirais pas de diminuer les sommes. Il ne faut pas se sentir ciblé dépendant de l'habileté de rencontrer. Vous savez, encore là, les temps sont difficiles. Dans certains cas, il est question de recevoir des argents du gouvernement fédéral du jour.

Maintenant on espère, dans nos ententes avec le gouvernement fédéral que, avec une nouvelle administration, non seulement nos relations iront en s'améliorant mais on espère être convaincu très bientôt que les argents, sinon en masse, de façon substantielle vont commencer à nous parvenir du nouveau régime fédéral.

**M. Grandmaître :** J'apprécierais une liste des

municipalités qui ont profité de ce programme-là en 1993. Je peux vous remettre la correspondance que j'ai reçue et c'est inquiétant, disant que si ce programme n'existe plus ou est diminué, les municipalités qui forment l'AFMO vont subir les conséquences, et je crois que présentement certaines municipalités ont profité ou joui de ce programme depuis un certain nombre d'années. Il serait difficile d'annuler ou même de modifier le programme.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez raison. C'est que nous avons une obligation vis-à-vis l'anxiété que des situations économiques difficiles peuvent poser. On comprend bien ça, mais je veux aussi vous assurer que de loin, on dépense plus d'argent que jamais auparavant sur les besoins de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario. Il se dépense plus d'argent qu'il s'en est jamais dépensé.

**M. Grandmaître :** Au niveau —

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Généralement, à tous les niveaux, il se dépense plus d'argent pour les Franco-Ontariens que jamais auparavant.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je parle du niveau municipal.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Bien, non, il faut aller à la grandeur.

**M. Grandmaître :** Ma question est au niveau municipal.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Pour un certain programme. On va vous envoyer ça, mais les choses vont bien. On a de plus en plus de municipalités, de toute façon, qui en font partie.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je viens de recevoir un appel d'urgence, alors deux minutes.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je vous en prie.

**M. Bisson :** Je voulais suivre un peu la question pas directement de M. Grandmaître, mais c'est un peu le sentiment. C'est un peu de ce dont on a parlé tout à l'heure. En se rencontrant avec des groupes à travers la province et même dans ma circonscription, c'est qu'on a toujours des attentes que les gouvernements fédéral et provincial pourraient livrer des gammes de services dans les plus brefs délais. C'est toujours un problème d'être capable de trouver les fonds nécessaires pour mettre tout en place et je pense qu'on se trouve dans une situation où il n'y a pas mal d'ouvrage à faire faisant affaire avec où trouver les dollars, comment on désigne nos priorités comme gouvernement, nos priorités en tant que francophonie.

La question que je te demande c'est, es-tu au courant de certains ouvrages de la part de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario et autres pour essayer d'organiser une vision plus évidente faisant affaire avec leurs demandes, avec les différents services ?

La question que je pose : vois-tu la communauté francophone se regroupant à ce moment-ci pour reconnaître qu'il n'y a pas un pot d'argent indéfini mais que la communauté a besoin d'être un peu plus clair faisant affaire avec exactement où elle veut aller, comme communauté, avec les services ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez raison. L'ACFO, présentement, est en train de définir, d'identifier les



besoins et c'est plutôt dans le futur : qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire pour mieux rencontrer notre mandat ? C'est un plan de développement global. Les argentés sont partis de la province pour aller vers l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario pour bien établir ce que vous mentionnez, Monsieur Bisson.

Quand on parle de garderies, l'avenir nous réserve quoi ? Quand on parle des services de santé à l'échelle communautaire, ça veut dire quoi ? Quand on parle de nos besoins scolaires, comment peut-on penser sur papier ? C'est quoi notre plan d'attaque ? Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait hier ? Nous en sommes rendus à quel point aujourd'hui et l'avenir nous réserve quoi ? Donc, tout est dans le plan, on y attache aussi un échéancier et on continue d'aller débloquer, d'aller chercher des argentés.

Quand on parlait de services en français, au début les gens étaient un peu sceptiques. Ça s'est fait petit à petit, au fil des mois, au fil des ans et les gens ont commencé à croire. On s'est dit : « Si c'était vrai tout ça. Si ces services étaient en permanence. Est-ce que ça fait partie de la vie de tous les jours, du quotidien ? »

Mais là on a développé, vu que c'était vrai, vu que ça l'est, une soif. On s'est mis, comme Franco-Ontariens, à regarder autour de nous, à regarder les autres, non à inventer des services mais à se dire, « Bon, un service déjà rendu, est-ce qu'il y a moyen de l'améliorer ? »

Donc, la gamme continue à s'élargir. Le nombre de services continue à s'amplifier. C'est que les gens croient aux services, en demandant de plus en plus et demandent de meilleurs services.

Donc il faut, pour un gouvernement, continuer à se resensibiliser. Il faut être au courant. Les choses changent, les demandes augmentent, donc nous, on dit : « On étudie ça, on se tient au courant, on apporte nos obligations aux changements, si on veut, et on écoute les besoins de la communauté francophone. »

Bien sûr, souvent il est question d'amener dans un partenariat la même responsabilité avec le gouvernement fédéral. Je ne veux blâmer personne ; ce n'est pas ma place ici. Mais vu que l'Ontario envoie moins d'argent au gouvernement fédéral, c'est difficile de s'attendre à ce qu'on reçoive plus d'argent. Donc, il faut faire la part des choses avec ce qu'on a mais on continue d'aller de l'avant.

J'ai écouté, comme vous, Monsieur Bisson. Je vais partager ça avec vous si vous allez me le permettre et je ne veux pas m'éloigner de la question, mais moi aussi j'ai écouté les résultats de la campagne électorale, parce que la politique fait partie de ma vie, donc c'est normal aussi. J'ai écouté les programmes de tous les partis et j'ai écouté les engagements, les promesses, et j'ai à peu près toute la littérature, la programmation de ces partis politiques.

J'ai le livre rouge, j'ai le livre bleu et j'ai même les programmes de ceux qui n'avaient pas de livre et j'ai ça sur bandes, donc je les ai. J'ai confiance qu'avec la nouvelle administration ces gens semblent décider à renflouer les coffres de l'Ontario pour que, quand même, on nous donne une chance de vivre, parce qu'on envoie tellement d'argent à ces gens-là et enfin on pourra arrêter

de dire que — vous savez qu'avec ces gens-là, on ne parle pas parce qu'avec eux —

**M. Bisson :** Est-ce que je peux vous demander —

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez jusqu'à 6 heures. Moi, je suis conscient de ça ; je prends mon temps. Avec eux, on paie tout le temps. On sait que ce sera différent maintenant d'après les promesses qu'on nous a faites.

**M. Bisson :** C'est quoi, cinq minutes entre collègues ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** On n'est pas à cinq minutes près pour vous, Monsieur Bisson.

**M. Bisson :** Une très, très courte.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** On va faire ça ensemble.

**M. Bisson :** Suivant ce que vous avez dit, on sait qu'on a eu des difficultés avec les négociations au fédéral avec le Secrétariat d'État, avec le présent gouvernement faisait affaire avec le collège et autre —

**M. Grandmaître :** Je m'excuse. Ce sont les budgets des dépenses de l'Office des affaires francophones, pas des affaires intergouvernementales.

**M. Bisson :** C'est très directement relié aux budgets. It's very related to estimates.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Avec le respect que je vous dois, je vois le lien avec les budgets.

**M. Bisson :** Ce que je demande c'est directement ça. Je sais qu'on a eu des difficultés à aller chercher notre fair share faisant affaire avec les dollars qui s'en viennent directement à la province de l'Ontario. Avez-vous des attentes, avec le nouveau gouvernement, d'avoir une meilleure coopération —

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Président, c'est une perte de temps. J'ai des questions importantes à poser au Ministre.

**M. Bisson :** — et aussi une possibilité de recevoir les fonds nécessaires pour le bureau faisant affaire avec les programmes pour les francophones de la province de l'Ontario ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Encore là, c'est touché. Vous avez cette habileté — je vous dis ça à titre non de compliment, vous me permettez bien sûr, mais simplement à titre d'observation — cette habileté dans vos questions, Monsieur Bisson, d'articuler de façon toute particulière les besoins de la communauté francophone. Vous le faites avec sagesse, vous le faites avec tact et de façon diplomatique.

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Ce qui est malheureux, c'est qu'avec certains de nos collègues, cette qualité chez vous ne soit pas contagieuse. Mais l'égocentricité, la vanité chez vous, ça vous a délaissé. C'est ce qui fait votre force. C'est ça, chez vous, votre beauté d'âme. On peut deviner vos politiques. Vous avez une philosophie. On dit que c'est certain que vous avez une philosophie. La politique, ce n'est pas de la même veine. Ce n'est pas souvent la même chose.

Nous, on reste quand même confiants avec la nouvelle administration libérale avec M. Jean Chrétien parce que nous savons toute l'affection, l'histoire de M. Chrétien, le bagage de M. Chrétien. Nous savons que M. Chrétien a toujours été sympathique, même en partant de sa province natale, des besoins de ses voisins, de sa famille



dans sons cas québécoise, que M. Chrétien a su répondre à ces attentes. J'en suis certain.

Il y a fort longtemps que je suis dans ma province d'adoption, l'Ontario, mais il s'agit de demander aux Québécois. Je suis certain, étant du Québec, de ce que les Québécois diront. Oui, Monsieur, on peut se fier à M. Chrétien en ce qui a trait aux attentes de chez nous maintenant, des Franco-Ontariens.

**M. Grandmaître :** Merci, Charles de Gaulle. Maintenant peut-être que le Ministre pourrait répondre. J'ai reçu un document intitulé Ontario New Democratic Government Accomplishments—Francophone Affairs. Ce n'est pas publié en français. "Bob Rae and the Ontario NDP government—

**M. Bisson :** C'est publié en français.

**M. Grandmaître :** —have taken important steps to encourage the francophone community to participate—

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous ne savez lire ni l'un ni l'autre. C'est publié en français. Excusez-vous.

**M. Grandmaître :** —actively in the social, economic, cultural and political life of this province."

Ma première question au Ministre concernant cette documentation qui a été publiée —

**Mr Bisson :** Just as a point of order for the assistance of—

**The Vice-Chair :** A point of order.

**M. Grandmaître :** —au mois d'août en 1993 c'est —

**The Vice-Chair :** A point of order, M. Grandmaître.

**Mr Grandmaître :** "The re-establishment of a council for Franco-Ontarian education to provide advice"—

**The Vice-Chair :** Monsieur Grandmaître, I have a point of order.

**Mr Bisson :** Just for the benefit of the committee, there is a French-language transcript of that particular document, an exact copy.

**The Vice-Chair :** That's not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson :** If he wants it, we can provide it to him to read in French.

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Président, merci bien. Je fais la lecture encore une fois : "The re-establishment of a council for Franco-Ontarian education to provide advice to the Minister of Education and Training on all matters related to French-language education in Ontario."

Alors, ma question : si on prétend qu'on répond à toutes les attentes des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, comment se fait-il qu'on fait exception à l'alphabétisme dans ce programme ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Monsieur Grandmaître, ça me permet, avec respect, au début un point de clarification. C'est que la publication est aussi présentée en français.

**M. Grandmaître :** Ma question est en français.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je vous écoute tout positivement. Je n'essaie pas d'être difficile. C'est vous —

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, j'attends une réponse positive, moi aussi.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez un problème d'attitu-

de, Monsieur Grandmaître.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, non.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez eu une enfance difficile. Ce n'est pas ici qu'il faut en parler.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je veux simplement avoir une réponse à mes questions. Ça, c'est l'endroit pour poser les questions et le Ministre doit offrir des réponses, même insatisfaisantes.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui, j'ai bien compris votre question.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez souligné que le gouvernement prétendait répondre à toutes les attentes de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Même si nous avons parcouru beaucoup de chemin, nous sommes tout à fait conscients qu'il reste encore un grand bout de chemin à faire.

Notre objectif, bien sûr, est de répondre à toutes les attentes. C'est un objectif. La réalité demande qu'on fasse le plus possible, en fait, qu'on fasse notre gros possible durant des périodes prospères mais aussi, de temps à autre, des périodes difficiles allant jusqu'à la récession.

Mais comme vous l'exprimez si bien, ce n'est pas l'embarras d'une administration. Je me souviens du climat d'unanimité lors de la proclamation de la Loi 8, indépendamment du parti politique que l'on représentait en 1986. On s'était donné la main. On avait, dans le collectif, mis la même épaule à la roue. On s'était dit, «L'unanimité, le positif, est de rigueur.» C'était dans la joie, mêlée avec un peu d'angoisse, bien sûr, mais c'était surtout la bonne volonté parce que plus important que notre humble poste, c'étaient les récipiendaires, c'était de répondre aux attentes des Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens.

Je sais que vos collègues continueront dans ce ton positif. Je vous invite à le faire, Monsieur Grandmaître. C'est plus facile comme ça pour tout le monde. Ça laisse une meilleure impression puis ce sont nous dans la collectivité qui en sortons vainqueurs dans notre communauté franco-ontarienne. Vous le savez, Monsieur ; vous y étiez.

**M. Grandmaître :** Est-ce que vous avez fini ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** J'ai répondu à votre question. J'attends —

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, ma question portait sur l'alphabétisation.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Ah, oui ?

**M. Grandmaître :** Vous n'avez jamais mentionné le mot «alphabétisation». Alors, pourriez-vous recommencer ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Sur l'alphabétisation, c'est qu'on dépense à travers —

**M. Grandmaître :** Encore plus ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** On dépense beaucoup plus en 1993 que dans les années précédentes. En fait, je m'étais chargé de l'alphabétisation.

Je me souviens avoir voyagé avec l'Office des affaires francophones, rencontrer des gens un peu partout puis on

se disait, et Dieu sait qu'on était sincère, que le projet d'alphabétisation, c'était à peu près ce qui comptait le plus chez nous.

Je me souviens être avec M. Beauregard et d'autres aussi et nous étions à Ottawa. On écoutait l'histoire des gens qui étaient condamnés dans le quotidien au menu du jour simplement parce qu'ils ne savaient pas lire ni écrire. Les gens s'étaient passé le mot qu'on donnait des cours, que l'Office des affaires francophones avait investi des argents pour qu'ils arrêtaient d'être gênés, pour qu'ils soient un peu comme tout le monde, pour que la perpétuité dans ce cycle arrête de l'être. Le mensonge était fini.

Au début, ils passaient par la porte de côté et prenaient les cours en hiver parce qu'il faisait noir. Aujourd'hui, c'est au grand jour, la porte de devant, parce qu'ils ne sont pas seuls. Ils ont regardé pour avoir de l'aide; ils sont timides, ces gens-là, vous savez. Ils sont défensifs. Bien oui, on a moins que les autres. Ils ne sont pas dans le coup. Nous avons écouté et non seulement écouté; on a commencé par là. On a multiplié les rencontres et les argents aussi. Je suis heureux que vous mentionnez et que vous avez à cœur l'alphabétisation parce que, vous savez, vous et moi et beaucoup d'autres, on n'est pas seuls là-dedans.

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**M. Grandmaître :** Ma deuxième question, M. le Ministre, c'est concernant le ministère du Tourisme et des Loisirs, "created a francophone unit and began a funding program for a francophone cultural centre." Pourriez-vous me dire combien d'argent a été remis à ces gens-là pour créer cette «francophone unit» ?

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** Je crois que les chiffres sont environ 300 000 \$. On m'informe que c'est à peu près ça.

**M. Grandmaître :** Pourriez-vous me dire comment ça fonctionne, ce nouveau groupe-là ?

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** Je ne veux pas me tromper, et votre question est fort sérieuse et à point. Donc, je vais demander à quelqu'un de notre Office des affaires francophones de vous expliquer en détails la façon de laquelle ça fonctionne.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien.

**M. Rémy Beauregard :** Le programme est à la disposition des centres culturels qui obtiennent annuellement une subvention en faisant une demande à cet effet-là. Habituellement, pour la programmation culturelle du centre, c'est souvent pour payer le salaire de la personne à l'intérieur du centre culturel qui a la responsabilité de coordonner les activités de type culturel et artistique au centre.

Les subventions sont en moyenne de 15 000 \$ à 18 000 \$. Ça varie, évidemment.

**M. Grandmaître :** Ça, c'est tout à fait nouveau, Monsieur le Directeur ?

**M. Beauregard :** Oui, c'est tout à fait nouveau. Pour la première fois, on a consolidé à partir du ministère et de l'Office des affaires francophones ce programme parce qu'avant ça, vous vous rappelez sans doute que le fonds de soutien de l'Office donnait à l'occasion des subven-

tions très minimes aux centres culturels. Il y avait des subventions qui provenaient du Conseil des arts, il y avait à l'occasion des subventions qui venaient du ministère de la Culture, mais il n'y avait pas de programme. Ce n'était pas consolidé.

Alors, on a décidé de mettre ce programme-là — d'ailleurs, c'est le seul nouveau programme que le ministère de la Culture, du Tourisme et des Loisirs a mis en place au cours de la présente année. C'est un programme dédié aux centres culturels francophones.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien. Merci. Ma troisième question concerne, pas l'engagement; on va l'appeler la détermination, si vous voulez, du gouvernement actuel de créer des conseils scolaires francophones. On dit dans ce document-là, "A report from the Cousineau commission recommending the creation of 12 new French-language school boards by 1994." Pourriez-vous m'expliquer ou me dire où nous en sommes rendus avec ces douze nouveaux conseils ?

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** Comme vous le savez sans doute, le gouvernement a formé une commission d'enquête sur l'éducation. On attend les recommandations, les données surtout et aussi, dis-je, les recommandations de cette commission d'enquête sur l'éducation.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, cette enquête-là doit être terminée au début de 1994 ?

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** Ce serait plutôt au mois de décembre 1994. Donc, naturellement c'est la fin de 1994. Écoutez, cette enquête sur l'éducation c'est une refonte. C'est qu'on va d'un bout à l'autre du système de l'éducation dans la province. Donc, c'est avec le plus grand sérieux, et vous serez sans doute d'accord avec ceux qui disent qu'une enquête d'une telle profondeur, un mandat aussi chargé doit être analysé de façon méticuleuse.

Donc, on attend d'ici à 1994 et ça donne à peine treize mois, sinon dans les plus brefs délais. Étant donné l'envergure du projet de l'enquête, c'est quand même un temps raisonnable.

**M. Grandmaître :** Mais l'enquête sur l'éducation n'a pas le mandat, n'a pas la responsabilité de recommander la création de douze nouveaux conseils scolaires.

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** Laissez-moi vous expliquer un peu pour essayer de vous aider à mieux apprécier le système.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien.

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** On parle ici de capacité juridique du ministère de l'Éducation. Les conseils scolaires, qu'ils soient des conseils scolaires anglophones, des conseils scolaires —

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, je parle de douze —

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** Voulez-vous avoir la décence de me laisser répondre ?

**M. Grandmaître :** Je répète ma question, "Twelve new French-language school boards by 1994." C'est ça ma question.

**L'hon. M. Pouliot :** C'est à travers la refonte, la représentation à l'échelle des conseils scolaires qu'on va trouver la réponse. Si on me demandait de spéculer, ce serait quand même d'évoluer en dehors de mon mandat,



si on donne aux gens la liberté, cette flexibilité, cette latitude. On donne les critères aussi, donc on sait attendre avec sagesse. Les gens s'appliquent à formuler des recommandations, donc, comme vous, on attend avec un peu d'anxiété, avec angoisse dis-je, les recommandations de la commission.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, entre-temps, pourriez-vous me parler de la création d'un de ces conseils-là dans Prescott-Russell ? Où en sommes-nous rendus ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je vais demander aux gens qui sont bien payés aussi pour répondre à ces questions : où en sommes-nous exactement dans la région de Prescott-Russell, sur la formation d'un conseil scolaire francophone ?

**M. Beauregard :** Dans Prescott-Russell, suite au rapport Godbout, il y a eu la création d'un conseil scolaire de langue française au niveau catholique et depuis ce temps-là il n'y a pas eu de création de nouveaux conseils scolaires, puisque le gouvernement a décidé de créer la Commission royale sur l'éducation et qu'il appartiendrait à la Commission de faire des recommandations sur tout le dossier de la gestion scolaire, y compris le dossier de la gestion scolaire francophone. Alors, depuis la création du Conseil scolaire de Prescott-Russell, il n'y a pas eu de nouveaux conseils scolaires de langue française.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, vous me dites que, encore un fois, on attend l'enquête sur l'éducation.

**M. Beauregard :** C'est ce que le gouvernement a annoncé quand il a créé la commission d'enquête sur l'éducation. Il lui a confié tout le mandat de revoir la gestion scolaire en Ontario, dont la gestion scolaire francophone.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est évident qu'on s'en occupe.

**M. Grandmaître :** On n'a pas l'intention, d'abord, de créer douze nouveaux conseils en 1994.

**M. Beauregard :** La création des douze nouveaux conseils était tout simplement le résultat du rapport d'un groupe de travail qui avait été créé.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, non, on dit ici "accomplishments."

**M. Beauregard :** Je ne sais pas ce qu'on dit dans le document.

**M. Grandmaître :** On dit "accomplishments." Alors, moi je pose la question.

**M. Beauregard :** À ma connaissance, il s'agit tout simplement des recommandations du rapport qui avait été préparé par M<sup>me</sup> Tréva Cousineau, qui avait été chargée de faire une étude sur tout le dossier de la gestion scolaire francophone.

**M. Grandmaître :** Absolument. Mais cela paraît sur la liste d'"accomplishments."

Mon autre question : "Improvement of services in French for francophone women who are victims of sexual assault." Pourriez-vous me parler de ce nouveau programme-là et combien d'argent a été alloué pour ce nouveau programme ? Non, je m'excuse, ce n'est pas un nouveau programme ; c'est une amélioration "of services."

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** La violence faite aux femmes ?

**M. Grandmaître :** Oui.

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**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Comme vous le savez, c'est un programme ciblé de notre gouvernement. Bien sûr, il reste beaucoup à faire mais on y a mis le paquet. Chez nous, ces programmes font partie de notre formation. Certains iront même jusqu'à dire que nous avons fait un travail d'apôtre.

C'est ce genre de politique qui nous différencie des autres. C'est que nous sommes, dit-on, un mouvement parti. Donc, ces personnes plus démunies, ces personnes abusées, c'est à grand coût de dollars et aussi à grand coût de conseils et de politique que nous avons rencontré nos obligations vis-à-vis les femmes abusées.

Combien d'argent dépense-t-on ?

**M. Beauregard :** C'est un programme de trois ans qui a été commencé en 1991. Le programme au total est de 1.8 million de dollars, dont 600 000 \$ par année ira pour les francophones. Le programme est divisé en deux. Il y a une partie du programme qui a pour objectif d'offrir des services en français dans les maisons de transition qui recueillent les femmes qui sont victimes d'assauts sexuels, et une partie du programme va également pour financer des projets de sensibilisation et dans les groupes de femmes francophones, dont la Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises de l'Ontario, l'Union culturelle des Franco-Ontariennes, SOS Femmes dans le centre-sud de l'Ontario et Direction-Jeunesse.

C'est un programme de trois ans qui se termine en 1994, mais nous sommes présentement, avec la direction à la Condition féminine et le ministère du solliciteur général, à réviser l'ensemble des résultats qu'on a obtenus parce qu'il y a une volonté qui a été exprimée de continuer à le faire.

De toute façon, les services en français dans les maisons de transition, qui sont financées par le ministère du solliciteur général, seront en place, et on espère que les programmes qui ont été financés à travers les organismes de femmes francophones pourront continuer à fonctionner en partie, sinon totalement, parce qu'il y a déjà eu des résultats très positifs.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, vous me dites que vous êtes satisfait avec ce programme-là.

**M. Beauregard :** Très satisfait.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien.

**M. Bisson :** Ça c'est nouveau. Où est-ce qu'on était rendu en 1990 ou 1989 faisant affaire —

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Comme vous le savez, M. Bisson, la gent féminine, les femmes sont victimes depuis toujours. Ce qui s'est dépensé en 1989 et en 1988 c'est rien de dépensé. C'est fort dommage. Le programme a commencé en 1991. Donc, nous sommes passés de 0 à 1,8 million de dollars. Je vous remercie de votre question.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je continue avec "Accomplishments: funding to improve French-language social services in eastern Ontario, specifically in the Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Pembroke, Prescott-Russell and Ottawa-Carleton areas." Les municipalités que je viens de



mentionner, ce sont toutes des régions désignées. Il n'y a absolument rien de nouveau là. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer "to improve French-language social services"? Je dois vous dire que je suis au courant de ce qui se passe dans Ottawa-Carleton, et la ministre du Logement, M<sup>me</sup> Gigantes, vient de faire un recensement. Mais par contre dans Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry et Pembroke, quels sont les services additionnels ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Les services à l'échelle des régions, des communautaires, notre personnel de l'Office des affaires francophones se fera un plaisir de vous donner les données, les chiffres là-dessus.

**M. Beauregard :** Je n'ai pas les montants exacts que les coûts des nouveaux services ont pu occasionner, mais par exemple, dans S-D-G on peut faire référence, sans doute, à l'établissement du Centre de santé communautaire de Cornwall, qui a aussi un satellite à Alexandria. On peut aussi faire référence à la désignation sur la Loi des services en français, des services à l'enfance, des services du Centre psychosocial, du projet Nouveaux départs à Cornwall, qui a été financé et qui est le volet francophone d'un projet aussi bien connu qui s'appelle Better Beginnings, Better Futures. Il y a un volet francophone à Cornwall, à Ottawa et à Sudbury. Celui de Cornwall fonctionne très bien.

Alors, il y a toutes sortes d'initiatives qui ont été prises au cours des dernières années dans ces milieux-là pour améliorer la prestation des services en français au niveau social.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Une bonne nouvelle.

**M. Grandmaître :** Monsieur le Ministre, en parlant de Cornwall, je crois qu'il y a peut-être six mois, je vous ai écrit une lettre, ou peut-être que j'avais fait parvenir une copie au directeur, concernant les services juridiques communautaires. Qu'est-ce qui se passe présentement à Cornwall ?

**M. Beauregard :** La Clinique juridique de Cornwall a été désignée en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français, comme elle l'avait demandé. C'était dans la dernière liste des organismes désignés qui a été publiée en juin dernier.

**M. Grandmaître :** En juin dernier ?

**M. Beauregard :** Oui.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, il n'y a aucun problème présentement, à Cornwall, que vous connaissez ?

**M. Beauregard :** Par rapport à la Clinique juridique — c'est ce à quoi vous faites référence — elle a été effectivement désignée.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je comprends ça mais je parle des services. On se plaignait qu'on ne pouvait pas offrir les services qu'on voulait. J'ai écrit —

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est amélioré, parce qu'ils n'avaient pas envoyé de lettres depuis six mois. Vous avez posé une question en trois ans et un mois ensemble. Donc on a répondu dans l'affirmatif à votre question.

**M. Grandmaître :** Puisqu'on sait, Monsieur le Directeur, que poser des questions en Chambre, ça ne donne absolument rien, parce qu'on connaît très bien la température, les étoiles, les nuages et puis toutes ces

grandes choses-là. Alors, on profite de l'occasion de se rencontrer en comité pour poser des questions, et encore une fois sans obtenir — par contre, je fais des notes et j'ai l'intention de faire circuler les réponses.

Mon autre question, "Funding for the creation of the francophone housing coalition in the Ottawa area": alors je veux savoir combien d'argent, et est-ce que ça fonctionne ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Ça fonctionne très bien. On va vous donner les chiffres dans un moment, Monsieur Grandmaître.

**M. Beauregard :** La Coalition franco-ontarienne sur le logement, d'abord, n'est pas juste dans la région d'Ottawa mais la Coalition est provinciale. C'est un regroupement à l'échelle de l'Ontario des organismes qui s'intéressent aux questions de logement social.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est nouveau, ça aussi.

**M. Beauregard :** C'est la deuxième année que l'Office des affaires francophones, grâce à son fonds de soutien, contribue au démarrage et au fonctionnement de la Coalition sur le logement. On le fait en collaboration aussi avec le ministère du Logement, qui a reconnu la Coalition comme étant son interlocuteur à l'intérieur de la communauté francophone.

Il y a évidemment chaque année, au fonds de soutien, en provenance de la Coalition, des demandes pour des projets spécifiques qui sont toujours bien reçues puisque la Coalition, au cours de la dernière année, a fait un travail assez important. D'abord, elle a tenu trois forums régionaux qui nous ont permis de mieux saisir les problématiques reliées au logement chez les francophones. Elle a tenu sa première assemblée générale annuelle avec la création d'un conseil d'administration qui assure la permanence de la Coalition.

La Coalition est aussi représentée sur des comités que le ministère du Logement a mis en place, des comités où elle consulte les interlocuteurs qui sont intéressés aux questions de logement social. Or, de ce côté-là, on peut vous dire aussi qu'on est très satisfait des résultats qui ont été atteints.

**M. Grandmaître :** Très bien. Merci. Je passe à, "A person now has the right to use French in all dealings with the College of Physicians and Surgeons." Est-ce que c'est nouveau, ça, Monsieur le Directeur ?

**M. Beauregard :** La Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées, qui a été adoptée, a fait en sorte que les professions qui sont visées dans cette Loi ont l'obligation de communiquer avec leurs membres en français et de leur donner des services en français. On n'a pas les détails de comment ça se fait à l'intérieur de chaque cas professionnel, mais l'obligation est là. Si vous êtes un membre de l'Association des infirmières de l'Ontario, de l'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers de l'Ontario, vous avez le droit de communiquer avec votre association professionnelle en français puisque cette association-là est maintenant réglementée par une loi provinciale qui a cette clause quant à l'obligation de donner des services en français.

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**M. Grandmaître :** Est-ce que ce collège-là est

reconnu comme une agence ou quoi ? De quelle façon est-ce qu'on reconnaît ces gens-là, dû au fait qu'on peut exiger des services en français ?

**M. Beauregard :** L'exigence, quant aux services en français, est inscrite dans la Loi qui a créé, qui a reconnu l'existence de ces organismes professionnels.

**M. Grandmaître :** Alors, ce n'est pas nouveau.

**M. Beauregard :** C'est nouveau dans le sens qu'il y a maintenant une loi qui est adoptée, je pense depuis deux ans, reconnaissant l'existence et la création des ces collèges-là. Ils ne tombent pas sous la Loi 8 puisque, pour tomber sous la Loi 8, il y a deux conditions : d'abord, le conseil d'administration doit être nommé majoritairement par le lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil, ce qui n'est pas le cas ; et deuxièmement, le financement de l'organisme doit venir en partie du gouvernement, ce qui n'est pas le cas. Mais puisque ce sont des organismes professionnels qui sont créés en vertu d'une loi provinciale, le gouvernement a jugé nécessaire que, pour les membres de la profession, il serait utile que les membres puissent communiquer en français avec leur collègue professionnel.

**M. Grandmaître :** Sur les désignations —

**The Vice-Chair :** Mr Grandmaître, excuse me. Your 30 minutes have elapsed. I'll now turn to Mr Bisson.

**M. Bisson :** Premièrement, avant de commencer les questions qui traitent du système de traduction, et c'est à Queen's Park, je regarde les membres du comité qui essaient d'écouter attentivement à travers leurs appareils de traduction, qui ne marchent pas toujours de première qualité. Je ne fais que souligner ça parce que je pense que c'est quelque chose qu'on doit soulever faisant affaire avec l'Assemblée législative, de regarder ce système-là, parce que c'est pas mal difficile pour ramasser toute la traduction à travers le «snap, crackle et pop» qu'on trouve à travers les appareils. I think we concur on that one.

Je ne fais que le souligner, parce que je regarde toujours le monde qui utilise les appareils de traduction. Ils ont toujours le problème d'écouter attentivement à travers le système. Ce n'est pas le problème des personnes qui font la traduction ; c'est un problème technique qu'on a besoin de regarder. Je ne fais que mettre ça sur le record pour en parler.

Je vais revenir sur la question d'alphabétisation dont M. Grandmaître a parlé, et je sais que vous vous penchez sur la question. Je ne fais que souligner une question faisant affaire avec ce qu'on appelle «outreach» ; je ne trouve pas vraiment le terme en français. Dans ma vie avant la politique, j'ai été coordinateur d'un programme d'alphabétisation dans le nord-ouest de l'Ontario appelé basic education skills training, qui est un programme d'alphabétisation au sein du milieu de travail à travers les syndicats.

Une affaire que nous avons trouvée et qui va revenir aux budgets des dépenses, c'est la question du temps que ça prend d'être capable de mettre en place un programme d'alphabétisation francophone, versus un programme anglophone. Premièrement, quand on fait «outreach», faisant affaire à essayer d'identifier le monde qui s'identi-

fie aux autres programmes pour dire, «Oui, j'ai besoin de l'aide», on a toujours trouvé un temps le plus maudit, spécialement avec les francophones.

On aime des fois s'identifier comme anglophone même si la langue qu'on a appris sur les genoux de notre mère est le français. Même si on est confortable en français, il y a une manière de désirer, chez la francophonie, de s'identifier, de prendre notre apprentissage écrit et de lecture en anglais même si ce n'est pas la meilleure chose à faire, d'un certain point.

Je soulève la question parce que ça veut dire des fois que les résultats d'un programme francophone sont un peu plus laborieux quand ça vient à trouver et venir au point d'être capable de mettre en place un programme. Quand on fait des comparaisons à travers le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation ou dans le temps du ministère de la Main d'oeuvre, les résultats des programmes francophones, comparés aux résultats des programmes anglophones, ce n'est pas tout à fait la même affaire. J'aimerais seulement souligner ça. Est-ce que le ministre délègue aux Affaires francophones, ou à travers le gouvernement, est-ce qu'on a commencé à reconnaître ce phénomène-là jusqu'à un certain point ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je vais demander à Monsieur Rémy Beauregard, notre directeur, de nous expliquer la différence entre un programme d'alphabétisation anglophone et francophone.

Monsieur Beauregard, depuis les genoux de maman, comme nous l'a souligné M. Bisson, à part de ça, ça fonctionne comment ? Je suis certain que M. Grandmaître aimerait aussi que vous portiez une attention particulière, puisqu'il s'est engagé à communiquer au nom de l'opposition officielle ce qui se passe, ces nouveautés qui ont été introduites par le gouvernement actuel pour mieux remplir les besoins de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Aussi, je vous félicite. Vous avez eu une enfance que je peux partager parce que moi aussi mes parents n'étaient pas riches. Donc, c'est dans l'échelle du peuple que vous avez fait votre apprentissage ; moi aussi, Monsieur Bisson.

**M. Bisson :** Est-ce que je peux clarifier un peu, parce que je ne sais pas si j'ai été assez clair ? Tout ce que moi je demande c'est que, quand les ministères regardent les résultats des programmes et regardent les chiffres importants, si le programme a été un succès oui ou non, y a-t-il une meilleure sensibilisation qui a été faite envers certains bureaucrates dans le ministère de l'Éducation envers les difficultés d'apprentissage, d'identification des francophones dans les programmes d'alphabétisation et les difficultés qu'on a qui ne sont pas comparables aux programmes anglophones ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Est-ce que le fonctionnarisme est sensibilisé, Monsieur Beauregard ?

**M. Beauregard :** Oui, puisqu'il y a maintenant, à la direction de l'alphabétisation, un gestionnaire qui est responsable du programme en français et on a reconnu, je pense, que la façon de gérer le programme auprès des francophones n'allait pas être nécessairement la même que la façon qu'on a de gérer le programme auprès des anglophones. Il n'y a pas juste une question de langue



mais je pense qu'il y a une question d'approche et une question de culture qui doit nous guider.

La difficulté chez les francophones provient de trois facteurs. D'abord, l'organisation de programmes d'alphabetisation chez les francophones est un phénomène assez nouveau. En Ontario, notre histoire dans ce domaine-là date de moins de dix ans.

Deuxièmement, les francophones, pour une raison qu'il nous reste à expliquer, sont relativement allergiques à l'idée d'aller à des programmes d'alphabetisation qui sont dans des structures institutionnelles, de type scolaire.

Troisièmement, il y a le fait que n'ayant pas d'expertise et n'ayant pas d'expérience, on est encore à développer des ressources de type communautaire pour donner les programmes, d'où la difficulté, souvent, de mettre des programmes sur pied parce que vous n'avez pas dans les milieux les gens préparés à cet effet-là.

D'un autre côté, je pense qu'un des éléments très positifs de ce qu'on a fait depuis dix ans chez les francophones, ça a été la mise sur pied de groupes communautaires, d'une approche très communautaire aux programmes d'alphabetisation. Ça a donné d'excellents résultats.

Vous avez fait référence dans votre question aux programmes qui existent dans le milieu des entreprises. Évidemment, on sait qu'au moins dans une entreprise, en particulier les francophones se retrouvent très nettement majoritaires et l'entreprise va être peu enclin à donner des programmes en français.

Or, vous savez où est la difficulté pour les francophones ; il faut bien la comprendre. Apprendre d'abord à écrire et à compter en utilisant sa deuxième langue, ça rend la tâche beaucoup plus difficile. Il a été démontré à travers des études au cours des années que même si on reconnaît qu'au niveau du marché du travail les francophones seront obligés, probablement et plus souvent qu'autrement, de travailler en anglais, les bases de l'alphabetisation doivent leur être données dans leur langue maternelle parce que ça va être la façon la plus facile d'acquiescer les données de base quant à l'utilisation des chiffres et de l'alphabet. Ensuite, on passe à la langue seconde, qui est celle qui va nous permettre d'avoir accès au marché du travail.

Alors, c'est un phénomène qui est relativement nouveau en termes d'expérience et de prestations de services. Je pense qu'on reconnaît au sein des gens qui ont la responsabilité de gérer le programme que c'est ainsi. Mais je dois vous dire qu'on sait aussi que ce qui a été fait en Ontario français au niveau communautaire, le développement de programmes, le développement de modèles d'apprentissage, la formation des individus, a été utilisé ailleurs au Canada et même au Québec.

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**M. Bisson :** Je veux seulement finir sur cette question-là. Dans mon expérience, il y a eu certaines occasions où on a été capable de trouver le succès de mettre en place des programmes d'alphabetisation en milieu de travail. Mais ça a été quasiment impossible de convaincre l'entreprise, le syndicat et les employés, à certaines occasions, que c'est mieux d'être capable de faire l'alphabetisation dans sa langue maternelle. C'est seulement

dans les communautés comme Hearst, Cochrane et même Timmins qu'on est capable d'avoir du succès parce qu'il y avait une majorité pour donner de l'appui partout dans la communauté.

Je soulève le point pour une seule raison. Il y a vraiment le besoin d'avoir une compréhension au sein du Ministère, et j'applaudis le ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones et le ministre de l'Éducation pour être capables de reconnaître ça, mais je pense qu'on a encore du chemin à faire.

Je peux vous dire qu'à Cochrane, par exemple, ce qui est maintenant Norbord — dans le temps c'était une autre compagnie qui faisait du «plywood» à Cochrane ; c'était deux fois plus long — a mis en place un programme d'alphabetisation en français au lieu de le mettre en place en anglais. Là, quand le programme est en place, c'est même plus difficile, le développement de matériaux etc, dans une province qui est pas mal majoritairement anglophone. C'est pas mal difficile.

Je ne fais que soulever la question et je le dis parce qu'on a été un certain chemin pour être capable de répondre aux problèmes, mais je pense qu'il y a encore une sensibilisation à faire, jusqu'à un certain point, à ce que je peux m'attendre à travers les groupes communautaires.

L'autre affaire que j'aimerais aborder c'est toute la question de conseils de santé régionaux à travers la province de l'Ontario. Possiblement, vous n'êtes pas capables de répondre à ma question en détails, mais une des affaires dont je me suis rendu compte, c'est pas mal ce que je peux comprendre en parlant de groupes comme l'ACFO, en parlant des groupes qui oeuvrent pour mettre en place des centres médico-sociaux dans différentes communautés dans la province l'Ontario, c'est qu'ils me rapportent qu'il y a une certaine résistance au sein des conseils de santé régionaux. Je me demande s'il y a une politique qui est en place dans le ministère de la Santé que vous connaissez qui demande à augmenter la sensibilisation de ces conseils ? Je sais que ce n'est pas exprès, des fois, mais des fois on oublie, dans ces conseils, qui sont majoritairement anglophones, de regarder aussi attentivement la question de santé pour les francophones dans certaines régions de la province. Il y a une différence culturelle, qu'on comprend tout, et des fois ce n'est pas mis à coeur, ce n'est pas mis au point quand ça vient au conseil.

Je me demande, premièrement, avez-vous entendu parler, de la part de certaines personnes dans les communautés francophones dans la province, de certaines difficultés avec les conseils ? Deuxièmement, est-ce que vous savez si le ministère de la Santé est en train de regarder cette question-là ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui. C'est que, suite à des demandes, on s'est permis de sensibiliser, une autre fois, la ministre de la Santé. Vous savez qu'il faut toujours, chez nous — chez nous surtout — faire attention, il faut être vigilant.

Le but ici c'est de s'assurer que les gens soient réceptifs. C'est plus facile si on y apporte une bonne volonté, une prédisposition. Je vais laisser ça comme ça un peu, mais c'est souvent le cas. C'est un peu une croix



à porter mais on essaie de s'assurer que les gens soient réceptifs. On fait un peu chien de garde chez nous aussi, la plupart du temps indirectement, mais s'assurer que les services soient en place, qu'ils soient bien donnés, qu'il soient faits avec courtoisie, avec bonne volonté, avec enthousiasme. Mais, ayant dit ça, on continue quand même à exercer une certaine vigilance.

Si les gens croient, perçoivent qu'ils seraient mieux servis en anglais qu'en français, dans notre cas, c'est qu'ici en Ontario, pour certaines gens, c'est tout aussi facile de se faire servir dans une langue plutôt que l'autre si on perçoit que le service pourrait être de moindre qualité ; c'est qu'on soit servi mais qu'on ne soit pas si bien servi.

Dans certains cas, s'il y a un contre-temps, c'est l'invitation à éviter la queue. Mais il faudrait que ça soit au-delà de ça, voyez-vous. Si on veut que des services se développent, il faut continuer à demander, à demander des services, à persévérer. Mais nous avons l'obligation, au gouvernement, de nous assurer à ce que les services soient donnés dans les deux langues non seulement de façon équitable mais de façon égale.

**M. Bisson :** Ce que je me demande c'est la question d'une sensibilisation qui a encore besoin d'être faite au sein de certains ministères, certains conseils faisant affaire avec le fait francophone. Les faits qu'on trouve dans nos communautés, des fois, ne sont pas aussi connus ou aperçus par certains groupes.

Je me demande s'il y a quelque chose en place pour être capable de faire une manière de programme de sensibilisation au sein de certains conseils. Je ne pense pas que le monde le fasse pour mal faire. Je pense que c'est une question que, quand on ne le sait pas, c'est une ignorance des fois sans le savoir.

**M. Beaugregard :** Il y a, à l'intérieur de chacun des conseils régionaux de santé qui desservent des régions désignées, des comités de services en français. Évidemment, ce sont des comités communautaires. Certains sont peut-être plus actifs que d'autres. Je pense que, quand un groupe francophone nous fait la même réflexion que vous nous faites aujourd'hui, c'est d'abord de les diriger vers le comité des services en français du Conseil régional de santé.

Chaque Conseil régional de santé aussi, qui dessert une région désignée, a des membres francophones au sein du Conseil parmi ceux qui sont nommés par le gouvernement provincial. Je pense que là aussi il faut que les organismes francophones qui ont des problèmes comme ceux que vous soulevez, prennent le temps d'aller sensibiliser les membres francophones des conseils.

Bien sûr, il y a aussi l'ultime tentative dans une situation particulière où il est toujours possible qu'on aille rencontrer directement, avec des gens du ministère de la Santé, un Conseil régional de santé en particulier où, comme vous l'avez dit, sans doute pas par mauvaise volonté, il pourrait y avoir des problèmes de compréhension.

On l'a fait à quelques occasions et ça a toujours été très bien vu par les gens du ministère de la Santé et par les gens du Conseil régional. On considère les gens des

conseils régionaux de santé comme étant des collègues. Ce sont des gens qui sont payés, à même les fonds publics, par le budget du ministère de la Santé, et dans nos contacts avec eux, c'est un mode de collaboration qui prévaut.

**M. Bisson :** Vous soulevez quelque chose d'autre qui n'est pas un problème mais je pense qu'il est nécessaire qu'on en parle un peu : c'est toute la question de la création de nouveaux collèges francophones dans le nord-est et dans le sud-ouest de la province.

J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer beaucoup de différents groupes dans les dernières deux, trois années faisant affaire avec la création du collège, et une entente dans la communauté francophone a été répandue. Je pense que la communauté francophone est très contente avec l'annonce de ce printemps et l'annonce qui a été faite aujourd'hui faisant affaire avec le comité lui-même.

Le problème c'est encore un de sensibilisation et puis une question d'éducation. J'ai eu la chance, sur l'autre bord du trente-sous, de parler à certaines personnes qui travaillent dans les collèges existants, comme le collège Northern, le collège Cambrian et autres, qui sont des institutions bilingues. Il y a une vraie crainte qu'il va y avoir moins d'occasions pour les francophones et les anglophones pour être capables de se voir l'un et l'autre et reconnaître qu'ils ne sont pas terriblement différents, faisant affaire avec besoins et désirs et ce qu'ils veulent acquérir à travers leur séjour dans les collèges.

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Laissez-moi essayer de le prendre de cette manière-ci, parce que c'est un peu «touchy», l'affaire. J'ai rencontré un couple de personnes, vendredi passé, faisant affaire avec la création du nouveau collège. Une chose qu'ils ont soulevée c'est que les institutions bilingues qu'on a présentement répondent vraiment à deux besoins, de la manière qu'ils voient.

Premier besoin, c'est qu'il n'y avait pas d'institution avant pour être capable de servir les besoins de la communauté francophone faisant affaire avec l'éducation post-secondaire. Dans l'interim, ils ont été capables de rechercher certains services à travers du groupe lui-même, à travers des collèges. Je ne sais pas si c'est correct, mais ils ont vu aussi les collèges bilingues être capables de répondre à certaines questions faisant affaire avec trouver une manière pour les deux solitudes de se rencontrer et d'apprendre un peu plus l'une de l'autre.

La crainte de la part de certains anglophones et même certains francophones dans ce groupe-là c'est qu'avec la création d'un collège unilingue francophone, on perd cette opportunité-là. Autant qu'on a essayé de parler pendant les deux heures qu'on s'est rencontrés et qu'on a essayé d'expliquer la raison d'être d'avoir un collège unilingue géré par les francophones et pourquoi c'est important, il n'y a pas eu de compréhension, il n'y a pas eu la volonté de comprendre l'autre bord du trente-sous. Je me demande si une éducation ou une autre sensibilisation qui a besoin d'être faite, faisant affaire avec certains groupes dans nos collèges et institutions présents et chaque —

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je comprends bien votre question.

J'essaie de détailler la réponse. C'est très, très intéressant, M. Bisson.

**M. Bisson :** C'est quelque chose que —

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Prenez votre temps.

**M. Bisson :** Je vais essayer d'être franc avec vous. Le groupe que j'ai rencontré n'était pas trop content avec moi parce que moi j'ai dit que ça fait longtemps, comme francophones, qu'on oeuvre pour avoir un collège francophone. Finalement on est arrivé au point où on va avoir notre temps sous le soleil et on a certaines personnes, j'ai pris votre terme, Monsieur le Ministre — comment dire, qui étaient fâchés ; ils étaient vraiment enragés, et autant qu'on a essayé de leur parler, de leur expliquer pourquoi c'était important, ça avait l'air de manquer. Puis moi je me demande, est-ce qu'il va y avoir une manière d'opportunité envers les institutions bilingues pour faire une sensibilisation dans le «staff» et en comité, pour faire comprendre un peu l'autre bord du trente-sous ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Quelle question détaillée et quel point de lumière. Monsieur Beauregard, donnez-nous un peu plus de lumière sur le dossier des collèges et aussi l'impact sur les collèges bilingues. Pour vous, ça veut dire quoi ça ?

**M. Beauregard :** Le seul exemple auquel on peut se référer évidemment c'est la façon dont ça s'est fait quand les programmes en français qui existaient dans les collèges dans l'est de l'Ontario, c'est-à-dire au collège Algonquin et au collège St-Laurent, ont été transférés à la Cité collégiale. Il y a eu en même temps un transfert de personnel et un transfert d'effectif. Ça c'est fait, dans le cas du personnel, en respectant les clauses des conventions collectives en place et en assurant au personnel le transfert des désavantages qu'ils avaient dans le collège anglophone.

En fait, il y a eu une entente qui a été signée de gré à gré entre la Cité collégiale, les deux autres collèges qui étaient visés par le transfert et les syndicats qui les représentaient. Je me souviens qu'à l'époque on avait eu des rencontres avec les gens du ministère des Collèges et Universités et les gens des deux collèges et des syndicats en question.

C'est sûr que la situation que vous soulevez par rapport à la réunion que vous avez eue avec des gens du collège communautaire dans votre coin, va continuer d'exister au cours des prochains mois parce qu'on va procéder avec la nomination du bureau des gouverneurs du collège francophone à un transfert d'effectif et de ressources.

Nous souhaitons que les gens vont continuer de se parler. Je pense que le Conseil des régents de l'Ontario est très au fait de cette situation-là et va sans doute aider dans le transfert des responsabilités.

Bien sûr que l'autre question que vous posez par rapport à la présence d'institutions bilingues se pose de façon plus dramatique puisqu'il n'y aura plus d'institution bilingue dorénavant. Il y aura un collège de langue anglaise pour desservir ceux qui veulent étudier en anglais et un collège de langue française pour ceux qui veulent étudier en français.

Comme en toutes choses, c'est sûr que deux collèges qui existent dans une même localité vont être obligés, à certains égards, de collaborer. Par exemple, entre la Cité collégiale et le collège Algonquin, il y a un certain nombre d'activités en commun qui se tiennent et sans doute qu'on va retrouver le même phénomène ailleurs. C'est une nouvelle façon de faire les choses. On ne veut pas lui donner nécessairement de qualificatif, tout simplement souhaiter que, dans la mesure où les collèges francophones ont été mis sur pied dans l'harmonie, le transfert de responsabilités entre les institutions continue à se faire dans la même harmonie.

**M. Bisson :** Ça me rappelle un peu les mêmes débats qu'on a eus en 1968 faisant affaire avec l'établissement des secondaires. C'était un peu les mêmes obstinations dans ce temps-là qui étaient mises en place.

Tout ce que je demande c'est que j'ai essayé et je continue d'essayer, dans ma circonscription, de trouver une manière d'établir des liens entre les deux collèges et les deux communautés. Ce n'est pas pour dire qu'il y a une grosse, grosse friction à ce point-ci, mais il y a la capacité d'avoir une grosse friction dépendamment comment on commence à avancer vers l'ouverture de notre collège francophone dans le nord-est de l'Ontario. Je pense qu'on a beaucoup à apprendre entre les deux communautés.

Si on regarde, par exemple, le collège Northern à Timmins, on a vraiment appris certaines leçons faisant affaire avec l'établissement des programmes à distance à travers les réseaux de communication Contact North. Il y a certaines affaires qu'ils ont apprises parce que c'était eux qui avaient vraiment commencé. Je pense qu'on a besoin d'établir des liens. Quand il y a des liens mis en place, on a moins peur de l'autre personne et ce qu'elle sera capable d'établir.

I'm just looking at direction from the Chair. I think you're looking at the time.

**The Vice-Chair :** In the absence of M. Grandmaître, we can continue.

**Mr Bisson :** I'm just wondering. Maybe my colleagues have something.

**Mr Wiseman :** That's all right. I've finished my questions.

**M. Bisson :** Je ne veux que souligner ça parce que je pense qu'à la fin de la journée, on va avoir en place deux très bons systèmes qui vont desservir les besoins de nos communautés. Mais je pense que la difficulté va être la transition elle-même, jusqu'à un certain point, parce que je vois cette résistance-là qui commence et ça me trouble.

Quand on se fait dire par certaines personnes, «Tu ne représentes pas mes vus sur l'établissement d'un collège francophone parce que tu ne veux pas établir de collèges bilingues», il y a un petit problème qui a besoin d'être résolu. Je pense que s'il y a une affaire qu'on doit faire comme ministère de l'Éducation et comme gouvernement, c'est d'essayer de trouver toutes les opportunités possibles pour être capable d'expliquer un peu plus ce qu'il se passe et comment la transition va avoir lieu pour être capable de mieux faire la transition elle-même.

La deuxième affaire c'est encore soulever la question



de l'éducation, mais cette fois-ci, le secondaire et le primaire. On sait que la Commission d'enquête sur l'éducation a comme travaux de regarder toute la question de la gestion. Je demande au Ministre, je sais que vous n'êtes pas capable de deviner ce que la Commission va faire, mais dans vos discussions, en regardant la Commission et la direction qu'elle prend, à quoi est-ce qu'on peut s'attendre nous, francophones, à travers la province de l'Ontario faisant affaire avec toute la question de la gestion ? Je sais que ce n'est pas une question facile à répondre d'ici à demain, mais dans quelle direction voyez-vous la Commission aller ?

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**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je ne voudrais pas spéculer outre mesure, mais qu'on s'en rapporte au début, le ou les précédents, les décisions qui ont suivi. Maintenant, la question c'est de savoir dans quelles recommandations on va reconnaître notre part des choses. La gestion scolaire, ça ne fait aucun doute. C'est de quelle façon on va procéder. Il y a une situation un peu cocasse qui se produit. C'est que nous sommes dans un climat où on essaie de simplifier, de réduire non les services ni jamais la représentation, mais l'effectif, de faire plus avec moins.

Le défi, c'est de retrouver une représentation universelle, donc une représentation accrue en obtenant, à l'échelle au plus grand tableau dans toute l'éducation, une meilleure valeur pour les argents en place. Donc, c'est ça le défi. Bien sûr, il y aura une représentation. La loi le demande. Il y aura aussi, semblerait-il, une direction qui nous dira : «Écoutez, nous allons être un peu plus maigres. Nous allons être un peu plus conscients de mieux dépenser les argents publics, et puis en même temps avoir une meilleure représentation, une plus grande représentation de la gestion à l'échelle francophone.

C'est l'art de la politique. C'est un peu de magie. Il faut savoir danser avec les temps. Et puis M. Cooke, vous savez, quand on parle de notre collègue qui est chargé de l'Éducation, c'est que nous sommes tellement en bonne main. C'est que, au coeur des choses, c'est une personne courageuse et puis lui aussi, justement, il me confiait la semaine dernière que bien entendu décembre 1994, n'étant qu'à treize mois d'aujourd'hui, lui a marqué une certaine impatience.

La raison pour laquelle il était un peu impatient c'est qu'il voulait progresser, poursuivre les recommandations avec attention et aussi établir les mesures d'après les recommandations. Donc, il est certainement désireux d'agir le plus vite possible. Hélas, c'est que le dossier est tellement volumineux. On touche la vie des gens, on a un impact sur les futures générations, donc il est important de bien faire les choses.

Mais sûrement c'est que la gestion scolaire pour la francophonie, semble-t-il, il n'y a pas de doute, est un droit qui a été réaffirmé à travers les précédents et les politiques du système juridique. Ce n'est que question de temps, mais nous on veut le faire aussi en dedans d'une réforme du ministère, si vous voulez, de l'Éducation, pas du ministère de l'Éducation mais une réforme du Conseil en matière d'éducation. Mais sûrement que nos services et nos droits iront en grandissant. Je pense que ça ne fait pas de doute nulle part.

M. Grandmaître, je vous remercie, en qualité de ministre, d'avoir choisi de revenir chez vous, chez nous ici. Donc, on vous souhaite la bienvenue encore une fois, M. Grandmaître. Vous avez sans doute des questions que vous voulez nous poser en guise de conclusion.

**M. Grandmaître :** Deux petites questions, non, une. À travers ma papeterie, j'ai trouvé justement la lettre. Je réfèrais aux services bilingues aux municipalités. Oui, vous avez reçu une copie de cette lettre, Monsieur le Ministre. Vous avez reçu la lettre ; c'est-à-dire que moi j'ai reçu une copie.

Ma question n'est pas ma question. C'est la question de mon collègue Jean Poirier.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Heureusement que ce n'est pas Doug Henning.

**M. Grandmaître :** Pardon ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je comprends. Je vous suis. Je m'excuse.

**M. Grandmaître :** C'est concernant la livraison du Coup d'oeil. On m'a remis ça cet après-midi en Chambre, en me demandant pourquoi la livraison du Coup d'oeil se fait de cette façon-là avec l'enveloppe en plastique et puis tout ça. C'est contre l'environnement. Comme vous le savez, Monsieur Poirier est un expert en environnement et on m'a demandé de poser la question. C'est dispendieux de faire ça ? C'est adressé personnellement à Jean Poirier. Moi, je n'ai pas reçu mon Coup d'oeil encore mais est-ce que c'est la nouvelle façon dont la livraison du Coup d'oeil va se faire dorénavant ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Monsieur Grandmaître.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je pose la question pour un collègue.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** On s'est rencontrés aux budgets des dépenses pour les Affaires francophones il y a fort longtemps, en 1988. Nous en sommes en 1993, cinq ans plus tard, une opportunité peu commune pour adresser en profondeur, en détails les besoins de nos soeurs et de nos frères dans la famille francophone.

Étant conscient de ces besoins, je suis aussi tout à fait conscient que le Coup d'oeil est une revue d'information qui sert à sensibiliser, à mieux informer les gens pour leur dire, «Écoutez, on sait que vous êtes là ; nous aussi». C'est un périodique qui apparaît à différents intervalles.

Nous sommes aussi conscients du rôle de cette opposition de Sa Majesté, du rôle de critique — hélas, dans notre système sans responsabilité, il s'est apporté des alternatives — et fort malheureusement conscients qu'on laisse échapper une opportunité de rendre notre collectivité meilleure en apportant plutôt des peccadilles.

Souffrir l'embarras en votre nom, Monsieur Grandmaître, de donner à mes collègues ces bagatelles, ces niaiseries, ça ne fait vraiment pas sérieux du tout. Vous avez une opportunité manquée. Vous me parlez d'une petite chose en plastique. On sait que c'est important. On sait qu'on essaie toujours de faire mieux, mais venir ici, avec tout respect, vraiment, et je choisis mes mots avec toute la délicatesse, mais certains de mes collègues — regardez-les — se font écoeurer, avec le plus grand sérieux, qu'on ait choisi de les niaiser.



Vous travaillez fort, Monsieur Grandmaître, mais vous travaillez fort surtout sur nos nerfs. Donc, je vous invite, vu qu'il ne vous reste qu'une seule question —

**M. Grandmaître :** Qui a décidé que j'avais deux questions ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Vous avez dit deux questions. Vous avez dit, «J'en ai deux», et vous en avez passé une. Un plus un, ça fait deux.

Votre dernière question, on vous invite à la donner avec la plus grande pertinence possible parce que nous on s'est dépensés à essayer le plus possible, au meilleur de nos connaissances, sinon aujourd'hui, demain au plus tard, de répondre à toutes vos questions. L'affaire du plastique, ça va prendre un peu plus de temps.

**M. Grandmaître :** Je pense que oui, et c'est pas mal élastique. C'est comme votre réponse.

Alors, si je peux continuer encore sur cette enveloppe-là, je me fais un devoir de représenter un collègue qui se pose la question avec les coupures budgétaires, avec le contrat social, le plan de coupures et toutes ces grandes choses-là. Je répète la question de mon collègue : vous ne pensez pas que c'est un peu dispendieux de faire la livraison du Coup d'oeil de cette façon-là ?

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Il est recyclé, le papier.

**M. Grandmaître :** Vous auriez pu sauver des argents et peut-être dépenser ces argents-là à offrir des services mieux que présenter une petite enveloppe en plastique.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** C'est du papier recyclé. Vous savez ce que je veux dire ?

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, ce n'est pas recyclable.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Qui est réapparu.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, ce n'est pas recyclable.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Oui, c'est lest.

**M. Grandmaître :** Non, pas le plastique.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Bien, oui, le plastique. Mes enseignes d'élection étaient toujours recyclables et elles étaient faites en plastique.

**M. Grandmaître :** Le plastique n'est pas recyclable.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Si, le plastique est recyclable. Il faut descendre de son bureau, aller dans l'industrie et demander aux gens qui connaissent ça.

**M. Grandmaître :** M. Poirier est un expert en environnement.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Hélas, on peut presque tout recycler aujourd'hui.

**M. Bisson :** Même les Libéraux.

**M. Grandmaître :** Oui. Surtout au fédéral on vient de recycler le NPD qui est rendu en sciure. Alors, vous n'avez pas répondu. Est-ce que c'est recyclable, ce genre de plastique-là ? Il faut que je donne une réponse à mon collègue.

**Mr Wiseman :** We're just recycling Jean Chrétien.

**L'hon M. Pouliot :** Je ne ferai pas de campagne personnelle sur les partis politiques. On a trop de respect,

tout le monde, sur le choix du peuple. Si on veut parler de recyclage, on n'a pas besoin d'aller trop loin.

Moi, je me souviens très bien, comme si c'était hier, de 1990. Il y a eu d'autres dates aussi dans l'histoire, vous savez. On se souvient de 1984, et qui aurait cru que 1988, le système se répéterait ? On vous félicite d'avoir gagné vos élections, et dans une couple d'années, vous saurez me dire ce que vous avez gagné ; ça j'en suis certain.

Le papier recyclable, de toute façon, ce sont nos experts, nos ingénieurs, nos chimistes, les gens qui s'y connaissent qui nous assurent que le papier est recyclable. Mais quand même, plus important en ce jour, c'est que nous sommes ici.

Je fais état de ce que le président me confie. C'est qu'on sera appelé dans le collectif à voter sur les budgets des dépenses des Affaires francophones et aussi on nous souligne, collègues, que nous serons appelés dans quelques minutes à aller nous prononcer sur les débats de la Chambre.

**The Vice-Chair:** Are you finished with your questions, Mr Grandmaître?

**M. Grandmaître :** Pas ma question, c'est la question d'un collègue. J'ai terminé.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** He's speaking on behalf of a colleague. Was it Mr Poirier—

**Mr Grandmaître:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** —who is omnipresent?

**Mr Bisson:** I'd like to make a motion that we accept the estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs for this—

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Mr Bisson, but there's an earlier question that we have to deal with.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm trying to be helpful.

**The Vice-Chair:** The minister is quite correct. We do have a vote on the Liberal opposition motion, so we should probably wind up now.

**M. Grandmaître :** Est-ce qu'on pourrait prendre le vote immédiatement dû au fait que je —

**The Vice-Chair:** I'm sorry.

**Mr Grandmaître:** Could you take the vote now on the estimates?

**The Vice-Chair:** That's what I'm going to do.

Shall vote 1501 carry? Carried.

Shall the estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs carry? Carried.

Shall we report the estimates of the Office of Francophone Affairs to the House? Carried.

This committee will now adjourn. We will resume studying the spending estimates of the Ministry of Education in two weeks' time. We will convene again on November 16. This committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1743.

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*\*In attendance / présents*

**Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Grandmaitre, Bernard (Ottawa East/-Est L) for Mr Elston

**Clerk pro tem / Greffier par intérim:** Decker, Todd



**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 16 November 1993**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 16 novembre 1993**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des budgets  
des dépenses**

**Ministry of Education and Training**

**Ministère de l'Éducation et  
de la Formation**

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 16 November 1993

The committee met at 1534 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We've been assigned seven and a half hours, but by virtue of the standing orders and the need to report to the House by the end of next week, we will be considering the Ministry of Education and Training both today and tomorrow.

I'm pleased to welcome the minister, the Honourable David Cooke, and his deputy, Charles Pascal. The committee is familiar with the process, so I will give the minister his opening time and then move to the official opposition. Minister, please proceed.

**Hon David S. Cooke (Minister of Education and Training):** Thank you, Mr Chair. I'll make a few—these aren't, I guess, like the old days when I was in opposition, when opening statements were about two hours for each party, but I have a few minutes and then I gather we'll have leadoffs from the Liberal Party today and some opportunity to have an exchange.

Mr Chair and members of the estimates committee, I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss our new ministry and its commitment to the lifelong learning culture for our province. And while we're here to talk dollars and cents, it makes sense to also discuss the future of education and training.

I want to touch briefly on where education and training fits on the public agenda, describe our own efforts to develop a new ministry of lifelong learning and then briefly present some key ministry initiatives required for our quest for a culture of learning.

It's no secret that the education and training system is under intense public scrutiny today. This is due in large part to the tremendous change that is going on in our world, in the economy, in society, in family life.

The public expects that the system will prepare students to thrive as individuals, to participate successfully in our rapidly changing world. People expect the education that students receive will help them develop the work skills and the personal characteristics they will need to contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of this province. They look to the training community to provide them with the skills needed in the new workplace.

Since becoming Minister of Education and Training last February, I have talked with many people, young people and adults, in communities throughout the province. I have been struck by their passion when they told me that the education and training system must be more responsive to them.

They told me loudly and clearly that the system needs to change. At the same time, I believe there is a great deal to commend the system for. We have talented, dedicated educators who are on the front lines of coping with the enormous changes in our society and providing high-quality education.

Education and training has a vital role to play in this government's plan for economic renewal. Accessible training, retraining and an education relevant to our times are essential elements to ensure the full participation of all Ontarians in a productive, healthy and successful economy.

I envision a system of seamless, lifelong learning opportunities from junior kindergarten beyond college and university to the workplace, and those learning opportunities will be accessible to all. I envision a system that places the lifelong learner at the centre of everything we do.

The Ministry of Education and Training is responding in practical and innovative ways to meet the needs of all our partners.

For instance, there has been public concern that students, parents and employers did not know how well our students were learning and whether they were learning what is needed to keep Ontario successful. We have established a wide-ranging examination of the elementary and secondary education system through the Royal Commission on Learning. Even while the commission is doing its work, however, we have instituted a number of changes that affect what is taught in our schools and how it is taught.

We are in the process of developing clear standards of quality and systems of measuring the results achieved by students. A foundation of this new commitment to accountability is The Common Curriculum. It is being implemented, but we are getting input from teachers on ways to refine the common curriculum.

The ministry must receive input and advice from external stakeholders on many aspects of our initiatives. However, with the integration of three former ministries into one—Colleges and Universities, Skills Development and Education—it was clear that we needed to review and streamline the advisory agencies and committees system.

We now have a committee at work streamlining our stakeholder advisory system with a view to improving efficiency and policy advice. Our aim is to reduce the number of advisory committees through consolidation and the elimination of redundant groups.

The activities of the Ministry of Education and Training encompass all aspects of lifelong learning. For instance, we are moving ahead with our belief in prior learning assessment, the notion that what people have already done or learned must count in their education. We have also established an innovative agency, the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, to lead the development of a highly skilled workforce in Ontario.

I'll talk more about these initiatives later, but first a few words about our own backyard.

My deputy minister and I were given a mandate to develop a new ministry, to innovate, to get beyond the

superministries of the past which kept in place the hardening of categories that has made lifelong learning policy and program development difficult. In my view, it is important and necessary to consolidate the former ministries with OTAB and the Jobs Ontario Training initiatives in a new ministry.

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We are well on our way to achieving our goal: a ministry which has the capability to work with partners across the learning sectors while retaining sector-specific expertise. We are grateful to the many partners who have contributed ideas as part of the shaping of our new organization.

We have high hopes for our new ministry. We want it to be responsive and efficient and to become a model of learning organization. We want to set an example by the manner in which we learn from working with many educational partners in the province. Two basic principles, accountability and equity, guide most of our policy initiatives in the restructuring of the ministry.

I'd now like to move to begin the discussion of our work in each of these areas.

Without a strong accountability framework, we might as well close up the shop and go home. We cannot meet the needs of our learners without being accountable to them and to the public. We need to be clear about outcomes and purposes, how we're doing in achieving them, and presenting accessible information about our progress in implementing change where it is needed.

The Royal Commission on Learning has a key role to play in the ministry's attempts to shape an education system that is accountable to the people who support it and use it. This is the most far-ranging examination of our elementary and secondary system in more than 25 years.

The commission has a mandate to examine elementary and secondary school programs, teacher education, the organization of the school system and accountability in education. This is a major undertaking but one that is crucial if Ontario is to continue to enjoy a reputation of providing quality education to meet the changing needs of its citizens. To carry out this important review of education, we sought out and were successful in finding five people with a broad range of personal and educational experiences, with a knowledge of our system and with a passion to make the school system work better and serve the needs of our diverse population. We will have the commission's report and recommendations by the end of 1994.

Among the strongest voices calling for a more accountable education system are those of parents. I believe that to be truly accountable, the ministry must reach out to parents in a more meaningful way. We must inform them, listen to their views and involve them in the decision-making process. That is why I announced the establishment of the Ontario Parent Council, with 18 members representing parents in all areas of the province.

There has been intense interest in the parent council. We've received more than 1,000 applications. This advisory council will not speak for any single interest

group, but will represent the views of all parents.

I expect the council to address specific issues of interest to it. I anticipate that there will be times when I will ask the council for its views on policies or initiatives that the ministry is considering. I look forward to this kind of input from parents.

Shortly after I became minister, I went on the road to listen to the public in a series of open forums in six centres throughout the province. I heard their concerns, their views and their suggestions. Much of what I heard led to the kinds of initiatives I am talking about here today.

It became clear that we had to change the way business has been done at the ministry. We must tear down some walls. We must become more open. We must share information and power more effectively and we must listen to our partners.

As part of our outreach, we have produced a number of publications to help the public to be informed. We have attempted to present these publications in a way that is clear and concise, in a way that cuts through the educational jargon or edubabble. For instance, we translated The Common Curriculum into plain language and made a commitment that all future ministry documents will be written in a language that people can understand.

This September, we produced the Back To School Report, a paper which informed parents of initiatives and directions in the elementary and secondary school systems. I should tell you that this particular document was co-produced by the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the ministry and the trustees' organizations, and all three signed off before the document went out.

We received about 5,000 responses to the mail-back coupon requesting specific ministry publications and reports, more proof that there is a strong public desire for information.

In addition to these publications, the ministry has put considerable emphasis on consultation on a wide range of issues. We have had considerable success in getting feedback through meetings with stakeholders concerning initiatives in special education, French language, grade 9 testing, junior kindergarten, anti-racism, university accountability and post-secondary harassment and discrimination policies.

The feedback I've received from parents since I became Minister of Education and Training has been very strong and very clear. They want to know what is being taught and how well their child is learning.

In response to this need and following extensive province-wide consultation, we have introduced the Common Curriculum. It sets out what students are expected to know at key points in their schooling: grades 3, 6 and 9. Built into the Common Curriculum are standards by which to measure what students have learned as a result of their school experiences.

There are accountability measures built into the Common Curriculum, and it therefore establishes expectations for all students. We are also currently engaged in a continual evaluation of the Common Curriculum to ensure its clarity, breadth and depth. The Common



Curriculum is designed for all students in grades 1 to 9 and it means that in grade 9 there will no longer be a different program for students of different abilities.

I should also indicate that the Common Curriculum document will be rewritten this fall, reflecting input and experience with the document up to this point. There were some comments initially that the document wasn't specific enough, that there needed to be some changes. That consultation process is going on now and we expect to reissue the document at the end of 1994.

Destreaming was probably the most controversial initiative we have implemented this year. As of this September, all boards except for a very few have stopped the practice of streaming grade 9 students into courses based on levels of difficulty: basic, general or advanced. We believe it was the right thing to do because we found that too many students from poor families or ethnocultural minority backgrounds were being streamed into basic courses of study in grade 9. Too often, students were put into basic or general levels because of reasons other than their ability. The introduction of the Common Curriculum plays a large role in ensuring that there are measurable standards of achievement for students in grade 9.

Another important ministry initiative also affects grade 9 students: universal reading and writing tests. Many grade 9 students in the province have just finished writing the tests, the results of which will count towards their final mark. By the end of the school year, every grade 9 student will have taken the tests.

The results of these tests will provide important information about the learning success of individual students and about education in general in Ontario. They will also give parents and students a clear picture of how well grade 9 students read and write and how well the education system is meeting expectations. We will use this information to determine how changes to the system can be strengthened to meet the changing needs of Ontario students.

During my term as chair of the Council of Ministers of Education this past year, all provinces agreed that the school achievement indicators program of testing math, reading and writing will continue and, by 1995, will be expanded to include science.

The province will also participate in the third International Mathematics and Science Study tests scheduled for May of 1995, with reports expected the following year. These international tests examine the education systems, including teaching practices and curricula, of Canadian provinces and other countries.

As I said earlier, we are focusing on accountability at all levels of learning. This year saw the establishment of the College Standards and Accreditation Council, which will develop consistent standards for all college programs. The council has the authority to define credentials, set standards and review and accredit publicly funded college programs. The council represents a significant step forward in ensuring all programs offered by Ontario colleges provide the vocational and life skills needed by students.

At the university level, last June I released the Task Force on University Accountability. I believe the task force's recommendations are a good starting point for developing a framework making Ontario's universities more accountable to government and the public. We have just received comments on those recommendations from the stakeholders and we will be developing an action plan for university accountability in the new year.

#### 1550

Learners come in all sizes and ages, all levels of intellectual and physical ability and many racial and ethnocultural backgrounds. They must have access to educational and training opportunities. Our schools, colleges, universities and the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board have to be open and accountable to the people they serve. They must be grounded in principles of equity, fairness and accessibility.

I'm particularly proud of the work my ministry has done in implementing the recommendations of the Stephen Lewis report. Recently, we appointed an assistant deputy minister to lead the anti-racism, equity and access division, whose influence will be felt both within and outside the ministry. This assistant deputy minister will guide the ministry in incorporating anti-racist policy in the ministry, school boards and post-secondary institutions and in curriculum development.

This division will ensure that all school boards develop and implement approved anti-racism and ethnocultural equity policies. By September 1995, all boards that have not done so must begin to implement their policies. The ministry has provided a number of resource documents to school boards to help them develop their policies, and ministry staff are available to help as well.

Last spring, a series of anti-racism round tables involving local school boards was held throughout the province. These round tables also included a variety of people from the community, from business and from the ministry.

The Jobs Ontario Youth program, under the leadership of my colleague Zanana Akande, was a tremendous success in finding summer jobs for minority young people who have been particularly hard hit by the recession.

Recently, I released guidelines to help colleges and universities review their policies to address harassment and discrimination. These policies cover all employees, students, members of boards, members of standing and ad hoc committees and all institution-sponsored activities, both on and off campus. The clear message is that we will not tolerate harassment and discrimination at our colleges and universities.

We have also issued guidelines indicating that board members of post-secondary institutions should reflect the diversity of their communities.

In this regard, we are also taking steps to see that the teachers of this province reflect the social diversity as well. We are reviewing admission requirements to faculties of education to ensure that qualified racial minority candidates are attracted to and enrolled in these programs.

We have addressed equity and access issues at the other end of the school system as well by moving ahead with the provision of junior kindergarten. The ministry recognizes that the early years of a child's life are pivotal in their intellectual and social growth. Half-day junior kindergarten will provide youngsters with the opportunities for a head start in developing their language, social and physical skills.

Bill 4, which received royal assent last July, requires school boards to establish junior kindergartens by September 1994. However, the ministry recognizes that some boards may have difficulty achieving this goal because of current economic conditions. So we have permitted boards to phase in the program over a three-year period. Full implementation means that a school board must provide a program for all pupils in its area whose parents choose to enroll them in junior kindergarten. Some boards have also come up with alternative programs that we have approved.

Another area in which equity and access play an important role is in the policies around education of exceptional students. We believe that, wherever possible, the educational needs of exceptional students should be met within their local schools. Research has shown that most children benefit from this approach to learning.

The ministry is currently developing new directions on the integration of exceptional students into regular classrooms. We have held a number of meetings with stakeholders and are now considering their views as we further refine policy directions.

However, the ministry recognizes that there are some students whose needs can be met more appropriately in alternative settings such as self-contained classes, provincial schools or residential demonstration schools. Options for future directions of provincial and demonstration schools are currently being reviewed by a special provincial schools project team in consultation with stakeholders.

This evaluation of the schools will ensure they are appropriately organized, managed and funded to deliver high-quality, cost-effective programs which meet the special needs of students. The project team is continuing public consultation, and we hope to establish clear direction by next June.

An issue that's very much connected to equity and access is violence in our schools. Students must have a learning environment free of the fear of violence. We've all read the newspapers and heard stories on the news. Recently, the deputy minister sent a directive to all school boards that when serious incidents of violence occur they must call in the police, report to the police.

We will be moving ahead to give clearer direction to school boards about violence prevention measures. But the bottom line is that schools must observe the principle of zero tolerance of violence.

The ministry's violence prevention secretariat is also consulting with teachers, parents, students and others in the community to find workable solutions to dealing with violence in its many forms.

Those in less populated and isolated areas of the

province have the same right to high-quality education and training as those in our urban areas. In 1991, the ministry established the northern education project to examine the needs of small school boards in northern Ontario.

A draft final report with 40 proposals intended to ensure access and equity for northern residents was released to the public and given to the royal commission in time for its hearings in the north. The final edited report will be ready soon.

This year I also announced the implementation of the prior learning assessment initiative, which reflects my belief that what a learner has already accomplished or learned should count for something. As of this September, a comprehensive plan for granting of credit for experience and prior learning is being phased into the college system. This recognition of prior learning is very much in keeping with our philosophy of lifelong learning. It is expected that this initiative will make colleges more accessible to underrepresented groups.

The francophone population of Ontario has not had good access to the college system. Too many young francophones were not continuing their education because of lack of accessibility and culturally sensitive facilities. I was pleased therefore to be able to announce recently the establishment of two new French-language colleges and a permanent campus in Ottawa for the already established and successful Cité collégiale. These are to be open for business by September 1995.

One of the new colleges will be located in the Sudbury area, with satellite campuses throughout northern Ontario. The second college will serve the south-central part of the province. It will be a college without walls, using satellites and other distance education technology to deliver its programs. The new college will make use of existing classroom spaces in schools, colleges and cultural centres.

The college without walls concept is an example of partnership at work. We cannot accomplish what we need to without the help of many partners in education: students, parents, teachers, business and labour, community groups and other government ministries and agencies.

A unique example of partnership at work is the "culture of change" initiative between the ministry and the Ontario Teachers' Federation. This initiative in partnership came about because of the concern of many teachers about their ability to implement change at the rate it was needed. It was clear that if we expected teachers to implement initiatives such as destreaming and the Common Curriculum, we had a responsibility to help them in a practical way. So the ministry provided financial support for this professional development project.

Among other things, it set up an electronic communications network for teachers across the province to share ideas and information on implementing change in education. Initially, the target was to get 1,000 teachers using the system. In fact, there are 2,000 teachers sharing resources, ideas and their creativity.

Many of our partnership initiatives involve training and job-creation programs. One of the ministry's most successful programs in the high schools is the school



workplace apprenticeship program, where students earn their high school diplomas while earning money in apprenticeship opportunities. Obviously, without the partnerships of employers, this program would not exist.

Our school work programs continue to show yearly increases in the number of students enrolled in them. Last year, for instance, almost 66,000 students took part in co-op education programs, an increase of 8% over the previous year.

The ministry has also established a new program: education-work connections project. This program has two main functions: to help students in the transition from school to the workplace and to keep kids in school longer. The partners in this initiative involve schools, employers and community groups.

The school-colleges linkages project will help to improve the transition of students from school to college. The results of this project will mean that more students are better prepared for college and therefore more successful. It means that fewer students will drop out before completing college. The project will also foster better cost-efficiencies by helping colleges develop plans for sharing facilities, faculties and eliminating duplication of courses.

#### 1600

This year saw the completion of the work of the Task Force on Advanced Training. Its report, called *No Dead Ends*, is a follow-up to the Vision 2000 project and makes a number of recommendations to ease student transfers from one type of post-secondary institution to another. The report provides a challenge to the post-secondary system to be more imaginative in crossing institutional boundaries to develop even more useful and appropriate programs of study. This is the kind of innovation necessary to build a more successful education and training system in an era of constrained resources. We are in the process of evaluating our specific actions in this regard.

The Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, OTAB, is perhaps the best example of innovation in partnership and power sharing. OTAB is an agency that will facilitate access to training and adjustment services for those who are laid off or facing layoff, for young people seeking to enter the job market and for others trying to re-enter the workforce. It will help individuals and communities adjust to the changes in technology, global trade relationships, competition and of course economic restructuring. It will lead the development of a highly skilled workforce in Ontario.

OTAB meets the very real needs to consolidate government programs, to eliminate duplication of services and to fill and identify gaps in the system. OTAB will also expand and revitalize the role for apprenticeships that link school with the workplace. It will evaluate and redesign training programs to ensure they are meeting the needs of Ontarians now and in the future.

It is being managed by those who know the system best. The partnerships represented on OTAB's board of directors include business, labour, women, racial minorities, people with disabilities, francophones and educator-

trainers. A seat has been reserved for aboriginal people, should they choose to participate.

OTAB and the Jobs Ontario Training initiative are key elements of the government's strategy for economic recovery. Jobs Ontario Training is a three-year government strategy for getting long-term unemployed people back to work. Like OTAB, it depends on partnerships for success, with employers, with participants and with those who deliver the program to both: the community agencies, known as brokers.

Jobs Ontario Training offers opportunities that no previous government program has been able to deliver, training opportunities and long-term jobs; real jobs for real people. It's a practical way of ensuring that those who lost the most ground during the recession don't get left behind in the recovery.

In the 14 months since the program became operational, 32,600 jobs have been created and 22,000 filled. That's 22,000 unemployed people who now have jobs, who probably would not have jobs without this program. Our latest information shows that 45% of the Jobs Ontario Training participants were previously on social assistance, and the remaining 55% had run out of unemployment insurance benefits or were not eligible for unemployment insurance; 85% of the jobs are skilled occupations that require a minimum of high school. The average wage is \$21,000 a year.

Jobs Ontario Training has the highest standards of accountability, through a system of staff auditing and monitoring procedures. For instance, Jobs Ontario staff monitor the brokers' funding needs and ensure that they have money to meet their commitments without building up a surplus. Staff also have random visits to brokers to inspect the books and to make sure the participants are in fact working and being trained. To manage our cash flow more closely, we have also reduced the three-month advance payments to brokers to two months. We are also working with brokers to manage their cash flow to employers.

Jobs Ontario Training offers hope to workers, concrete help to employers and a minimum savings this year alone in government social assistance payments of \$135 million.

In closing my presentation today I want to talk about how we will achieve our goal of an education and training system that centres on the needs of the learner, and how we will accomplish this in a fiscally responsible way.

We are changing the way we do business within the ministry to accomplish this fundamental goal. We will do it by setting an example in the practice of partnerships and fiscal responsibility.

It has been clear for some time that it is necessary to develop a fairer and more effective system of education financing. This has been the subject of extensive work both within the ministry and in conjunction with the Fair Tax Commission. We are also receiving input into this process from the Advisory Council on Education Finance Reform.

First, however, we felt we had to look in our own



backyard. The ministry reorganization will result in considerable cost-efficiencies. But any major restructuring may bring with it some anxiety and dislocation and job loss for some. We have worked hard during our restructuring to be very open, to consult with staff, to keep them informed, to seek their advice and to provide personal and job counselling for those affected by change.

The early retirement packages were accepted by many staff, but that has meant a loss to the ministry in ministerial knowledge. We hope that the new corporate culture we are instituting will compensate for that loss.

As the ministry is going through this major restructuring we expect school boards and post-secondary institutions to examine their own operations and structures to find ways to cut costs and to put more money into the classroom, where it belongs.

The government's overall expenditure control plan announced last April resulted in reduced grants to school boards, colleges and universities. That obviously caused great concern. However, together with the social contract process, this has prompted boards, colleges and universities to look closely at their own operations to find cost-efficiencies and to innovate.

I appointed two fact-finders to look at ways of streamlining school board operations in Windsor-Essex and Ottawa-Carleton. Their reports present a number of possible solutions that other boards will want to consider. The royal commission will also find these reports valuable research for its work.

Some boards are already investigating the idea of consortiums to enable neighbouring boards to share costs in such areas as administration, payroll, transportation and technology.

At the post-secondary level, there are a number of cooperative efforts going on. In one example, my ministry has given a planning grant to McMaster University and Mohawk College to investigate the feasibility of a single health sciences facility.

Many boards, colleges and universities are also taking advantage of the ministry's transition assistance fund to examine their operations and develop permanent, more cost-efficient ways of doing business.

In addition, we now ask school boards to examine their plans for new schools to see if they could include multi-use facilities shared with other community or municipal groups. Schools that include a library, recreation and/or day care centre are examples of good multi-use buildings.

We have taken on major initiatives this year: the restructuring of the ministry, the restructuring of education, the restructuring of the provision of training for jobs. But this is no less than the public expects of us; it is no less than they deserve.

By example, we are proving that partnerships based on mutual trust and respect and a shared vision of the future of lifelong learning can go a long way towards achieving these goals.

While these are difficult times, I believe these are exciting times in education and training. We are moving ahead with initiatives that will reshape the way we approach and deliver education and training opportunities

in Ontario. The work we are doing now will benefit generations to come.

Mr Chair and members of the committee, the goals of my ministry are important for all of us and our constituents, and the issues are extremely complex and at times very contentious. I look forward to questions and comments and the opening remarks from the opposition parties.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. Perhaps we can move to Mr Beer.

**Mr Charles Beer (York North):** I think, given the nature of today and the fact that my Conservative colleague isn't able to be here—we talked a bit yesterday just about how we might proceed—our sense was that, as we have two days, if it's agreeable to the minister, other members of the committee and the Chair—in those two days we obviously can't cover everything in a ministry that covers such a vast array of programs. We would be quite agreeable to stacking the various votes so, in effect, we would be able to discuss a variety of topics, if that's agreeable with everyone. If it is, I was going to make a few general comments at the outset.

**1610**

One of our colleagues, David Ramsay, is here today. He can't be here tomorrow. We wanted then perhaps just to start with some of the training issues, if that's all right, and I think be fairly flexible about people coming in on related questions and so on. We have approximately an hour and a half or so. I think there's a vote. Is that generally agreeable, Mr Chair, in terms of how we might proceed? What thoughts do you have?

**The Chair:** The Chair's in the hands of the committee. I'm guided by the standing orders with respect to certain aspects of time allocation. However, once opening statements and the minister's final response are completed, then the committee can order its business up any way it so chooses. I alluded earlier to the fact that we will probably only sit today and tomorrow since the standing orders require us to report to the House.

The absence of the third party critic has been noted. However, it has been the custom, and the committee can confirm now if it so chooses, that we can stack the votes to occur at the end of tomorrow's committee hearing. That would be the first issue, if that gives you any comfort.

**Mr Beer:** I just thought if that's agreeable.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** We'll stack them. That isn't a problem.

**The Chair:** Although Hansard doesn't record it, I'm getting a lot of nodding and encouragement that there's consensus on that point.

**Mr Beer:** I don't have a formal statement that I'm getting to make. I want to just put a few points on the record.

**The Chair:** Mr Beer, it's your half-hour to use any way you wish and any of your members as they wish, but it's your 30 minutes to order up any way you so choose. So please proceed.

**Mr Beer:** Then I will go ahead. First of all, Minister,

I want to thank you for your statement. In preparing for these discussions, we felt that it would be a better use of time to be able to explore some of the areas, because in many regards, in many of the areas that you're talking about—the goal of lifelong learning and then how do we go about organizing for that—in terms of a number of the principles and the directions, there's not so much a difference of opinion around those as perhaps more specifically on some of the ways that we chose in terms of how we're going to get there. I think in terms of a number of major points you noted were things that were brought to your attention as you have been out in the province talking to people. I think it's not surprising that those are similar to what I'm hearing. Indeed, I suspect if we were to sit in at some of the meetings of the royal commission, we would hear those same views.

I think it is clear that at this point in time, there is a real window of opportunity in that people's minds are really focused on education and there is a desire to bring about some real change. It would seem to me there are perhaps four key public policy issues there and I want to note those and simply say that in discussion and exploring questions around those, we will do that over the course of the next two days.

First of all, I would agree completely that accountability is one of those key issues. What one hears time and time again is the need to have clearly defined standards, outcomes, that are expected from the system and then a clearly defined method of evaluating whether we have achieved those outcomes. Then, I think, thirdly, what kind of resources do we have in place in order to assist those students who aren't able to meet those outcomes whether because of learning disabilities or other problems? I think this issue around accountability, which really speaks of the overall quality of the system, is one that I just think all of us are hearing about and that's the one we need to address.

The issues that I know you have raised with your colleagues in the other provinces around the development of national standards are something which will follow from that. Clearly, we have to get our own house in order first, but I think, as one looks down the road, that we are all looking towards a greater commonality perhaps among the provinces in terms of how we deal with some of these issues. I think that is key and there are some questions we would be interested in exploring around the grade 9 test, and in more specific detail, where we're going to go with that.

The second major public policy issue, I think, that is out there revolves around governance. This is expressed in terms of, what really is the role today of school boards. What ought it to be? What is the role of the Ministry of Education? What should it be doing? I guess increasingly, people are trying to explore some other related mechanisms. "School council" is one of the terms that is often used and I think we're still trying to determine what exactly is meant by that, but if we are looking at a slimmed-down ministry in terms of administration and the same with school boards, is there still a need for some new kind of body or mechanism at the community school level that would be part of that governance

system, not in opposition and indeed part of a partnership with trustees, with parents, with the community?

I think that with the community, we're not just talking about parents and teachers, but indeed others who have valid interests in the educational system and who we want to encourage to be part of that, whether we're talking about business, labour or just plain interested citizens who may not have any young people in the system.

In a specific sense, at this juncture we also need to talk a bit about labour management relations. I think anyone who looks at the current scene has to have concerns about the potential for some real problems. We need to look at the impact of the expenditure controls, of the social contract on what is happening. We have some specific examples, I suppose, in terms of what happened in Lambton and what is currently going on in east Parry Sound and in Windsor. We need to look at what are some of the options out there so that we can really try to ensure that there is as little disruption in the schooling of the children in the system as there can be.

Also in terms of governance and questions around the future direction the government is planning to take with respect to francophone education, I welcome both the statement and also the fact that the government has been able to move on the community colleges. That's very important and has been very well received within the francophone community, but I think there are still a number of questions around the question of elementary and secondary governance that we need to look at.

Finally, in terms of the ministry restructuring, there are some issues around how that is functioning in terms of dealing with or allowing to be dealt with the key areas in the elementary and secondary, coupled with colleges and universities and with training. This is one of those things where the ministry on paper makes every sense, but where there are clearly some organizational problems in terms of how to deal with all of that and the rate and pace of change.

The third fundamental issue is funding. You've made reference to that. We'd like to explore a bit with you what may be coming in terms of the Fair Tax Commission and also the work within your own ministry around funding, and whether it's still your intention or goal to try to bring in some kind of legislative framework or a white paper in early 1994 to address that.

The fourth area, which in a sense links all of these but which is very critical, and with the difficult financial times is made even harder, is the whole question of the integration of children's services and where education fits into that. More specifically, what is the role of school boards in providing a host of services that have grown up over the years that perhaps could be more appropriately defined as social or health-related services and yet are seen as very important? If the boards aren't doing them, who will be and how do we meet that?

1620

We had a debate in the Legislature a few weeks ago. This is an issue that's been on the table. We've had the Children First report and so on, but I think we need to



explore that. The question of violence is one that I think is also related, because obviously the reasons in many cases for the violence that occurs may go back simply to lack of supports, lack of services that are available to young people as we try to deal with that and, at the same time, trying to recognize that the school system can't be all things to all people and that it can't provide all of the roles of surrogate parents. But if we don't get that one right, it seems to me it makes it very difficult to come to some clearer definitions around accountability and governance structures and indeed funding.

In terms of the elementary and secondary areas, those are the overlapping issues that I think cover, frankly, most of the things you raised in a more specific sense. We'd like to take some of them on a specific basis and deal with them as we go through the next couple of days. I'm going to stop there and let David raise the training issues, and then we can get into others as well as the post-secondary.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'd like to thank the committee for its flexibility in allowing us to divvy up our time in this way to accommodate my schedule. I'd like to thank my colleague Charles Beer for doing that.

Minister, I'd like to zero in on one of my critic responsibility roles, and that is training. I must tell you that I was absolutely shocked that in a 20-page statement in estimates, where we would expect a little more detail as to the state of your ministry, less than one page has been dedicated to OTAB. OTAB, as you have said and your government has said, is a major initiative of this government, a major initiative that I think the general public believes is quite necessary in Ontario today, as we know the tremendous need for retraining of our population so that we can be part of that new competitive economy, an economy that is changing so rapidly that it's catching many of us flat-footed in regard to the skills that we have.

There has been a long chronology with your government in regard to this particular board. In the initial throne speech after you assumed power, you talked about adopting some sort of training and adjustment board that the previous Premier's Council had recommended. It wasn't till the fall of 1991 that we began the consultation. We had introduction of the bill a year later. Last winter, we had our second reading hearings under the previous minister, and I think just in that time there was the cabinet shuffle. Finally, on July 20, we had third reading, with royal assent the next day. So we've had a long history with the development of this.

You now haven't given us any details as to where OTAB is. Many of us have been very anxious to know how the development, how the implementation of OTAB has been proceeding.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** That's what estimates is for. I only had 30 minutes.

**Mr Ramsay:** I will then give you the opportunity right now, because what I would ask you is that we would like to know how you are working on the implementation of OTAB. What is happening? What's happening with the implementation of the LTABs? Which of those groups are taking responsibility for what at this

time? I think people are very anxious to hear this.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Do you want to go into questions now?

**The Chair:** That is what the member is requesting, so, Minister, feel free to respond.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I wanted to respond to some of the things Charles said too, but I guess we'll have an opportunity to do that later.

**The Chair:** You'll still get 30 minutes.

**Mr Ramsay:** Charles was giving you an easy time there. I thought we'd give you a little bit of—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Great. What I'll do is answer on a couple of the areas you referred to. The assistant deputy minister and the deputy minister are both here as well, and Joan Andrew is on OTAB and I think left a board meeting today where they were talking about bylaws and so forth, so she'll be right up to date as to where they're at.

The board, as you know, has been established, announced and the boundaries for the regions or the different LTABs in the province, as I recall—and Joan will correct me if I'm wrong—have been sent to the federal government with our recommendations. They've been there for a while, but other things have intervened. I'm sure the new minister will get to it as soon as possible, but that may take a little bit of time.

I don't know when we'll actually get a response back on the LTAB boundaries. Programs have been sent over to OTAB, so all the programs that were to be under the OTAB jurisdiction have been transferred at this point and the board is beginning work. That's where it's at in the broadest sense.

**Dr Charles Pascal:** Just to add, and I'll ask the assistant deputy minister, Joan Andrew, to fill in a bit as well, the boards have had probably about 30 hours of orientation, strategic planning, settling issues around bylaws and rules of work and quorum rules. The memorandum of understanding between the government and the board is going to take several months. That's a very important framework document in terms of setting priorities and accountability mechanisms, because as Mr Ramsay has pointed out, this is an incredibly bold and important experiment.

The process for choosing the permanent chief executive officer is well under way, and the LTABs, which as Mr Ramsay fully appreciates, are extremely important to the communities out there in terms of the transition from the CITCs to something new, await a four-partner process.

As the minister has explained, the issue of boundaries is being discussed between bureaucrats in our ministry and the federal government's human resources and labour ministry, and that has to be a four-cornered agreement with the provincial government, OTAB, the Canadian Labour Force Development Board and the federal ministry. But as the minister said, Joan has just come from the latest meeting and perhaps will want to fill in some of the pieces.

**The Chair:** I am in Mr Ramsay's hands, quite



frankly. Do you have specific questions for the ADM or do you want another report?

**Mr Ramsay:** I would appreciate a continuation of this update as to the status of OTAB.

**The Chair:** Very good.

**Ms Joan Andrew:** The staff and the programs were transferred from the various ministries to OTAB October 1. OTAB has an operating budget of about \$440 million a year; about 550 staff. There is staff from the old Ministry of Education youth employment services branch and literacy branch; almost all of the old Ministry of Skills Development, with the exception of federal-provincial relations staff and some of the corporate services staff, which stayed in the ministry.

Some of the Ministry of Community and Social Services programs were also transferred, and one small program from the Ministry of Citizenship and the Office of Labour Adjustment programs from the Ministry of Labour were transferred to the board October 1.

The staff will over the course of this fiscal year all be located—the Toronto-based staff, that is, as opposed to the field-based staff—by the end of the year at 625 Church Street.

The board meets for two days every four weeks, approximately. They're halfway through their November meeting today. They're addressing issues right now of bylaws, of the establishment of councils. They have a subcommittee already established at the board to look at local board issues and to drive that process.

The minister, in his letter of transfer to the co-chairs of OTAB, indicated that the government's two top priorities for OTAB were the establishment of local boards and the finalization of the memorandum of understanding, because that's the accountability mechanism. We're working on that with the staff at OTAB.

**Mr Ramsay:** I appreciate that; thank you. I'm very concerned about the establishment of the local boards. Do you have a time line of when you would predict that you would be really commencing that in earnest and when you think it would be completed, the establishment of the local boards throughout the province?

**Ms Andrew:** The federal government has indicated that it has to brief its new ministers before it can get back to us, and because local boards are a four-way partnership with the federal government, it's not up to OTAB and the provincial government, I guess, to move unilaterally on the establishment of local boards. So at this point we've worked for two years on local boards in relative cooperation with the four partners and it seems unnecessary to move unilaterally.

1630

I would think over the course of this winter the boundaries will be finalized, guidelines will be issued to communities as to how people become designated as local boards, and we will begin the process in one or two areas that are farther ahead than others on the designation of local boards. The phase-in of local boards across the province in the 25 or so areas that there will be will be staggered, I would think, over eight or nine months.

We're quite interested in local boards reflecting the

communities they serve, and that there be a process in those areas to establish the local boards and establish accountability mechanisms and that they not be imposed from the top down. There won't be one day on which all local boards are up and running.

**Mr Ramsay:** What I'm concerned about is that it's my understanding of how OTAB is going to work is that most of the administration of programs will be delivered at the local level. First of all, let's discuss that. Is it a correct understanding that OTAB itself would not be administering programs but most of the programs would be administered at the local level?

**Ms Andrew:** OTAB right now does administer programs because it has inherited the old government programs. How it chooses to reform its programs and how it chooses to work cooperatively with the federal government in joint programming at a local level remains to be resolved. There are some programs, for instance, the sectoral training agreements, which always will be province-wide. If we have a sectoral agreement with the steel industry, that won't vary from locality to locality across the province. There are local programs, the Ontario skills development offices, that are quite localized and meet the needs of local employers as they come forward, so there'll be a variety of programs.

Our hope is that local boards, as they come up, will replace the functions being fulfilled right now by CITCs that are there right now, will start providing input in terms of the needs of local community, coordinating federal and provincial training programs in a local area to meet the whole needs of the community and will, over time, take on more responsibility for training and adjustment. When there are major sectoral adjustments to be made in the province, not everything can be handled locally. There obviously has to be some provincial and national agenda in terms of those kinds of major adjustment initiatives.

**Mr Ramsay:** In the legislation, one of the criticisms that we in the opposition had was that it wasn't specifically spelt out as to what the responsibilities would be of the LTABs. The legislation dealt with the establishment of OTAB and basically it was OTAB's responsibility to establish those local boards. Has that work really commenced where we have a sense now of what those responsibilities will be of the local boards? Have those regulations that would establish the local boards been started yet?

**Ms Andrew:** No, we haven't worked on regulations, partly because what local boards do is also a federal-provincial issue and we haven't had the freedom to discuss with the federal government recently what exactly it would do. We also have to sort out the legalities of a piece of Ontario legislation governing what their responsibility for federal programs will be. So we may only ever have regulations as those apply to Ontario programs, not the whole mandate of local boards. Even as the regulations come out, they may not reflect the whole mandate of a board. They may only reflect the mandate vis-à-vis provincial programming.

**Dr Pascal:** If I may, I think the timing, as Mr Ramsay said, in terms of moving ahead gives OTAB the freedom

and the, if I can use the word, empowerment to begin acting as this province's arm in that four-cornered process.

It's not to say that there haven't been some ideas kicked around from the provincial point of view with respect to how those roles should be managed, but for us to discuss that publicly might be seen to be somewhat belligerent since again a four-cornered agreement really requires that there's a round table where there's some power shared around how that takes place.

It's really critical that this opportunity, this window, be exploited to deal with some of the problems of the past in terms of labour market planning and jurisdictional problems, in terms of who determines what the demand is and the supply issues vis-à-vis macrolevel planning in terms of a province or a country and how that's to be distributed in terms of resources and planning in local bodies to be called LTABs. This hasn't worked all that well in the past because of the lack of opportunities for all these partners to sit at the same table and plan.

Determining the roles is really critical, and if it was done beforehand it would be a contradiction in terms in terms of the word "partnership."

**Mr Ramsay:** That's what I'm a little bit concerned about. I guess the two statements are making me a bit uneasy as there seems to be a lack of clarification of the roles and responsibilities in regard to training between the province and the federal government, yet we went ahead with this particular legislation.

I think most of us thought that the deal had been cut as to what the provincial role would be in regard to the federal government and that we were doing our end to get our agreement in place so that we would work with the federal government in cooperation to oversee training in the province of Ontario. You're telling me now there's a lot of to-ing and fro-ing back and forth with the federal government to really clarify how this is all going to be implemented.

**Ms Andrew:** No. I guess I'm saying there hasn't been too much to-ing and fro-ing because federal civil servants have been waiting to brief their new minister. I think we're in a particular period right now where civil servants at OTAB, at the provincial government, at the federal government, the Canadian Labour Force Development Board, probably have all developed options. We probably have some options to present to the minister.

All I'm saying right now is that in the absence of the new minister of human resources and labour being briefed on the issues, we have agreed, as part of a four-party agreement, that we don't have final positions yet on the development of local boards.

That's not to say there hasn't been quite a lot of work done on it and not to say we don't all have our own viewpoints and that we aren't very close to agreement. We're just trying to respect a process we've been involved in with the federal government for a couple of years. That's all.

**Mr Ramsay:** From what I'm hearing, this is going to take an awfully long time to get boards up and running, let alone the OTAB itself, but also the LTABs.

**Dr Pascal:** I make the assumption from my most recent discussion with my federal counterpart, and I believe he's still the deputy minister, that he himself has provided leadership to a fairly major reorganization as well, which made some discussions difficult.

What there is is a fairly good understanding with our federal counterparts about what the outcomes to the new relationships are supposed to be in terms of coordinated planning, a much better impact for the dollars that are in the systems. With respect to the how, I think Joan Andrew has given you a sense of the difficulties. I would assume the federal government has a very strong interest in getting on with this in the next several weeks, getting back to it after the minister has been briefed by the deputy.

With respect to your original question, which is the importance of getting the LTABs up, I'm optimistic that we're probably looking at some early successes, probably in the late spring to late summer part of the year. As Joan has suggested, the implementation is not going to be monolithic. It'll evolve as quickly as possible where there's a readiness and where the community partners have already gotten to yes with respect to how the representation should evolve.

**Mr Ramsay:** I just have one more question, Mr Chair, on this and maybe I could address it to you. I don't know if you've seen this letter. There was a letter addressed to the minister on September 28 in regard to one such meeting that was held by OTAB to start establishing the LTAB steering committee. This was at the H.J.A. Brown facility on September 23, 1993, and it's from the institute of computer training. This person has a tremendous amount of complaints as to how these meetings are run. There's no agenda sent out, only a very skeletal agenda presented at the time of the meeting; no list of invitees or attendees there. The complaint is that there's an unequal amount of representation from the various groups that are invited here and then they start to vote on who will be the representatives from the various groups.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Meetings of? I'm not clear.  
1640

**Mr Ramsay:** The title of this letter is "Request for annulment of the meeting of the LTAB steering committee at the H.J.A. Brown facility on September 23, 1993." This is a letter I guess that was addressed to you, to the Premier and copies to everybody else around Queen's Park from the institute of computer training in regard to some of these meetings that I guess are already under way.

What I'd be interested to know is, and I can pick it up at a later time, if there's a response to this letter since it came at the end of the September and to see what's happening with some of these initial meetings where you are trying to develop the LTABs.

**Ms Andrew:** There is a response to that and we could provide it. Communities are organizing their own meetings and they aren't always easy meetings. OTAB is not organizing these meetings. I think in particular, if my memory serves me correctly on that one, it was a meeting



of the private training community in trying to decide among all the trainers in a given area who would be on the steering committee. There was some dissension, as I recall, but it was a meeting organized by a group of people who have self-identified in that community as being a local board. It wasn't something organized by OTAB.

**Mr Ramsay:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** How much time is there, Mr Chair?

**The Chair:** Give or take 20 seconds. Go ahead.

**Mr McGuinty:** I missed your opening statement but I've reviewed the written version here and a couple of the things that I wanted to get into were tuition fees. Obviously that's a big item on the student and university administrators' agenda. I want to talk to you about the income contingency loan repayment plan. Why don't I begin with that.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr McGuinty. I was trying to be humorous. But what I was going to suggest was if we're going to change the formatting now—I'm in the committee's hands—I'm in a bit of a quandary because normally it would be fair that the minister would have time for rebuttal or closing statements based on the presentation of the two critics. Ms Cunningham has a commitment in her riding that she couldn't overcome, so I have to ask the minister if he wishes to proceed and do rebuttal time now or if he wishes to do that tomorrow and then we can go into a rotation for questioning. I just want to make sure that we have a consensus among the committee on what we're doing, and the minister would like to know just how we're going to proceed.

**Mr McGuinty:** Fair enough.

**The Chair:** So the Chair would entertain a brief discussion on that and also how the minister feels as well.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** If I might, as I understood from the two Liberal critics, I think that Charles raised a number of issues you wanted to get into more depth on with questions and answers and I think you were suggesting the same thing. I don't really need to have 30 minutes to rebut, and I'm sure that our members would also like to pop in some questions too. That's fine with me.

**Mr Beer:** If that's fine with everybody; I just think it's a more useful use of time.

**The Chair:** That's fine. As long as everybody has agreement how we're doing it, then we'll do just fine. What we'll do then is that if you want to scope out an area you wish to work in and if other members wish to raise questions, then we'll proceed on that basis and the minister can call forward any of his staff he has with him today.

**Mr Wiseman:** I wanted to raise just a point for thought, that if the minister were to reply or to rebut for 10 or 15 minutes today just to the Liberal critics, then that would leave the minister 10 or 15 minutes to rebut to the Progressive Conservative critic tomorrow, should the minister feel the need to do that. I would hope that nothing we do here today would preclude that possibility tomorrow.

**The Chair:** We're not technically seizing our standing orders, but we are called to follow a certain—

**Mr Wiseman:** I want to leave some options open so that there's flexibility tomorrow, should the minister feel it necessary to make some comments.

**Mr Beer:** Sure. No problem with that.

**Mr Wiseman:** So maybe 15 minutes now, 15 minutes tomorrow.

**The Chair:** I have no trouble with that. I was recognizing Mr McGuinty, but if the minister wishes to respond to the opening statements, if he wishes to take some time now—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** No.

**The Chair:** Fine.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I wouldn't mind at least keeping that option open tomorrow, after Dianne's, but let's get into this.

**Mr McGuinty:** I wanted to have you address, Mr Minister, this issue of an income-contingent loan repayment plan. There has been some experience with that in other jurisdictions in the world, I'm sure you're aware, although it strikes me that it's been rather limited. I believe Australia has had some kind of plan of that nature in place since 1989.

So we have not yet really been able to properly assess the effect of a substantial debt load on recently graduated students and the impact that has on the economy and their ability to spend and to do all those kinds of things that you do when you come out of school and are getting under way in life.

I'm wondering first of all if you can tell me something about your pilot project, which I understand is under way. Why don't we start with that?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** We had some discussions in the ministry on this a couple of weeks ago. The pilot project—I don't believe it's up and running. One of the difficulties that we will have with our pilot project is that the students it will be able to target will not necessarily be students of low-income families, because we can't integrate the two programs, the Canada student loan program and OSAP, until we get some kind of national approach to income contingency. So we will be able to get some limited experience with the pilot project. I think we're looking at 1,000 students, but it's not going to give us all the information we're going to need.

There are other provinces that are interested in pursuing this with the federal government as well. We didn't get terribly far with the previous government, but I think there are a number of jurisdictions that are more optimistic about moving in this direction with the current federal government.

I think the Council of Ontario Universities is looking at wanting to have a conference on this whole concept as well. I think they were suggesting that it might be done through CMEC. That's one option that could be looked at. Experts from other jurisdictions that have had experience with this could get involved. I believe McMaster is having a conference next month on this as well. So a lot of opportunities are going to exist. We'll have to test out



fairly soon how the federal government feels about this and whether it's prepared to move on it.

I'm going to turn it over to the ministry, but one further comment is that I think one of the major problems we have with our current student aid programs is that there's not a lot available to middle-income students. I think the program is fairly successful, as it currently exists, for low-income students, but for middle-income students there are real difficulties. I think moving to an income-contingent program will not disadvantage at all the low-income students now who are using the Canada student loan program and OSAP, but it will have the significant advantage of being able to open up financial assistance to a broader range of students with a broader range of income and therefore result in post-secondary education being accessible to more students.

**Ms Christel Haeck (St Catharines-Brock):** Mr Chair, before we continue, could I just ask for a translation of some acronyms that I may not have firmly ingrained in my memory? What is CMEC?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Oh, CMEC. I'm sorry; Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

**Ms Haeck:** I thought it might be, but I just thought it might be worth asking the question.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I try to avoid that; I really do.

**Mr Beer:** Why don't we try to avoid edubabble and not fall into it.

**The Chair:** Okay. I do believe you still have the floor. Did you wish to direct a question to ministry staff? If so, would you please introduce yourself for the record.  
1650

**Dr Pascal:** This is Jamie Mackay, our resident expert on all things dealing with student support.

**The Chair:** I really would appreciate his proper title, which is why I asked the deputant to put it on the record.

**Mr Jamie Mackay:** We're right in the middle of a reorganization. I guess until Monday I'm the—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Jamie. Could I get your proper title for the record?

**Mr Mackay:** Jamie Mackay, acting director of the student support branch.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mr Mackay, can you tell me a bit more about this pilot project?

**Mr Mackay:** I'd be pleased to. First of all, as the minister indicated, we'll be providing 1,000 loans this year. The maximum value of the loans will be \$2,500. This is a one-year program with two years to pay back the loan, so in effect it's a three-year pilot. We've had to constrain it in certain ways to fit it within that kind of time period.

First of all, students who will be eligible to receive these loans would not normally be eligible for OSAP, would have a family income that we would normally consider them ineligible.

Second of all, we want to get students who are in the last year of their program of study so we can test their ability to repay based on their income when they enter

the workforce the following year.

There's really two things: that they not be eligible for OSAP, that they've applied and not been able to get it because of family income reasons, and, secondly, that they are in that last year of study.

In terms of where we are with the program, we're actually sending out this week detailed instructions to financial aid offices at colleges and universities with respect to how the program will work. This includes detailed instructions for students in terms of their applying and describing the program, how it will work, how the payback will be geared to their actual income over that two-year period.

For example, if a student is making below \$20,000 they wouldn't have to start making any payments, and if they kept below that income threshold for the two years their loan would be completely forgiven. Students making, say, \$35,000 would be expected to pay back the full amount over that period, and students making somewhere between that would be paying a portion of the amount back and then we would be forgiving the rest. We also have plans in place that we would adjust their payback after the first year if there was a change in income.

**Mr McGuinty:** Tell me, if we want to project this pilot project from its limited nature to a broader scale, how is this going to be of use to us if we're talking about a \$2,500 loan offered in the last year to be paid back within two years? When we're talking about, at the end of the day, if you get into this ICLRP—sorry to use that; income-contingent loan repayment plan—if we're talking \$30,000 or \$40,000 in student indebtedness, I just don't see how realistically this kind of pilot project will enable us to assess whether a full-scale program will work.

**Mr Mackay:** I think you're right. One of the things we're doing is using the opportunity to provide some funds to students who otherwise wouldn't get them because their parents are failing to provide them the kind of support they need. In terms of providing us with detailed information on which we'd be able to base a future decision to go ahead with the program, I think you're right. Any income-contingent program, as they're conceived, has 15 to 20 years before it's fully self-financing, before paybacks into the program are paying out and covering the costs of all the loans that have been made.

It's an opportunity for the ministry to do a little modelling, like, how would we gauge repayment to income? We'll be able to look at how successful students are at paying back according to this very limited test. It'll provide us with a little experience in operating a program of this kind, but certainly it's just not on the kind of scale or scope that you would like to have.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mr Minister, how wedded is your government to this concept of income-contingent loans?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I think we have made it fairly clear to the other ministers in other provinces and the federal government that we would like to work with the federal government to develop this approach, but it's going to have to be done nationally. We think it's a good

approach to move in and we'd like to do a lot more work on it. There's no use doing a lot of work in Ontario or any individual province if we're not moving on it at the national level, because it can't be done at the provincial level.

**Mr McGuinty:** Is it your understanding then that all provinces have to be in on this?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I don't know whether all provinces would have to be in it. I think it would probably be difficult if you started having a few provinces in and a few provinces on the old Canada student loan program and so forth, but my reading of CMEC meetings, of ministers' meetings, is that there is substantial support for moving in this direction.

There was obviously a lot of fear in other provinces, and this province, of some of the directions the previous government was moving in, in terms of national student loans. So there was a lot of concern expressed by other provinces and a desire to move in a direction that was going to provide more accessibility. I know BC was very strong and actually was promoting this before Ontario was.

**Mr McGuinty:** If I could ask one further question in connection with this, then I'll pass it on to others who have some other things they'd like to bring up.

We've collected some figures here and determined that the number of students who are defaulting on their loans, and I guess making application for what's called the interest relief program, is skyrocketing. In 1987-88 there were about 2,100 applicants for that program, and in 1991-92 there were 6,100. In 1987-88 we had to write off \$1.5 million in student loans; in 1991-92 we wrote off about \$4.5 million.

My concern with the income-contingent loans is that we are at a time when our students are finding it extremely difficult to obtain employment at the end of the day, or even to obtain employment on a part-time basis during the course of their studies. They are having difficulty paying those loans. What we are considering here is increasing their indebtedness, because I'm assuming that the income-contingent loan repayment program will go hand in hand with an increase in tuition fees. I am wondering about the advisability of considering more indebtedness when they can't handle the indebtedness they have now.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** The whole concept, the whole principle of an income-contingent program is that the repayment is based on income. I think it's pretty fundamental fairness that if a person goes through our college or university system and becomes a doctor or any other professional—we know the unemployment rate of university graduates is much, much lower than the unemployment rate of students who don't go to post-secondary institutions, so we know that the income is considerably higher. So why is it not fair to look at professionals who go through the system paying their loans back more quickly, whereas other students who would graduate and be at the very low income level, as has been explained, have a much different repayment schedule?

On the numbers you've quoted, and I'm sure Jamie will want to reply, it's not entirely fair to quote a number of \$1.5 million or \$4.5 million. A \$4.5-million default out of what? The default rate of Ontario student loans has been virtually insignificant compared to what has happened federally. There is a whole series of differences, I gather, in the way they monitor and so forth, but Ontario has had 2%. It's been extremely low. I would suggest the numbers that you're quoting would still be in that range of the 2%.

The amount of money that's being provided right now for student loans in Ontario is very significant, very high. I don't know if that properly explains it. The numbers, I'm sure, always go up a bit in a recession, as you would expect, but still, there's no evidence in those numbers you've presented that would indicate that there's anything fundamentally wrong with the program or that there's anything that would be unexpected during a recession. The numbers are still extremely low. If anything, I would expect the default rates to perhaps even be higher than that during a recession, out of the total amounts of money that we're expecting to be repaid.

1700

**Mr Mackay:** Further to the minister's point, since the inception of the Ontario student loans program in 1978, \$580 million has been issued in Ontario student loans. We've only written off \$12 million, which is the 2% figure the minister was referring to. The federal government gets some pretty bad press regarding the amount of CSL that's been written off. That's something they're working on with a couple of banks. We don't get exact figures from them on defaults. They promised us some by province so we can look at how we are doing.

The interest relief program that you referred to is a feature really that is designed to prevent students from defaulting. Yes, we have got an increase in applications for it over the last couple of years, but essentially what it allows students to do is postpone that time when they have to start making their repayments.

We normally give them a six-month interest-free period for Ontario student loans, at which time they have to come in, consolidate their loans and arrange with the bank to start making their payments on them. If they are making below \$20,000, they can apply to us and they can get an additional 18 months before they have to begin repayment. So that gives them a full two years after graduation.

In fact we are adding a feature to that program this year with the new plan that, even for students who are making more than \$20,000 and less than \$30,000, they can have a portion of the interest deferred to sort of make that initial repayment a little easier for them. As I mentioned, I think that is really something that we hope will keep the default problem in check.

**The Chair:** Ms Haeck has a question.

**Ms Haeck:** Actually, I was going to defer to Mr Wiseman and I will, if you would put me on the list for a little later on.

**The Chair:** I have a speakers' list, so I'll add you.

**Ms Haeck:** If you would put Mr Wiseman in for my



slot and I'll take a later slot.

**Mr Wiseman:** I'm going to try and preface this question in as short a way as possible. I guess it comes from 14 years in the classroom that I'm premising this. For the longest time, I was using textbooks that were 10 years old. When you're teaching history, a decade out of date really puts you behind the eight ball.

At the same time as I was using a textbook that is out of date by 10 years, the amount of money being spent by the board on non-classroom delivering functions was going up. In the board where I come from, there are 500 portables in the public school system. The board is debenturing to build a \$30-million administration building.

The year when the OACs were introduced, money was made available to buy new textbooks, but that money had to be spent in the fiscal year that the money was granted. But the textbooks were not coming until the following year, so in effect literally hundreds of thousands of dollars were being spent, and this is in 1988-89, on books that were only functional for about a year's period.

This seems to be going on and on and the classroom teacher I think is getting more and more frustrated with this and sees that simple things like rolling the budgets over from one year to the next or using money in a more progressive way don't seem to be happening. I'm just wondering how it is that the Ministry of Education can monitor the spending of this kind of money.

It raises a question of what should you be funding and how should you be funding it. Clearly, in my mind at any rate, the student is supposed to be the focus of where we spend our money. Yet I read numbers as high as 43% of the dollars that are being spent outside of the classroom in administration levels, in superintendents doing philosophical studies and passing these papers around to one another and it bypassing the classroom teacher up here in the clouds somewhere.

If you could answer that question in the next little while, I'd really like to hear how these changes are going to be put into place, because I look at the system now and I see lots of money being spent but very little of it making its way into the classroom.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** First of all, I'm not sure that under the current system we have the kind of control or quite frankly the kind of information that would allow me or anyone else to answer your question. I'm not sure we can give you specific numbers of how much money is spent in the classroom, how much is spent on administration, how much on coordinators or other positions that exist in the school boards across the province. Some of these data would be available, but not to the level that we probably should have them available.

Ultimately, I think we need to take a look, and one of the objectives of education finance reform has to be to allow the ministry to have more control over where provincial funds are spent so that there are more opportunities for provincial policy to be set with respect to expenditure of education funds. That's certainly one of the goals that we've set for ourselves in the education finance reform package.

We need to try to make the system more accountable at the local level too, so that parents and taxpayers always will have the opportunity to see how funds are being expended as well as the people who work for the boards. Teachers and caretakers and support staff should also have access to all the information of where money is being spent and be part of that partnership.

**Mr Wiseman:** Those books are not currently open to the public or to parents.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** There is certainly some information that is guaranteed under the Education Act. There obviously has to be some understanding as well—and we've had some examples already of members of the public who have gone into certain school boards and asked for everything to be opened up, which is not entirely practical, because if every member of the public came in and did that, then we'd end up hiring more administrative staff in order to provide that kind of level of information. But there is certainly a reasonable and appropriate level of information that should be available.

**The Chair:** Mr Hansen's here, if you want to get some comments from the finance branch.

**Dr Pascal:** Mr Chair, if I can just interject, if the question has been answered by the minister in terms of one of the objectives of education finance reform is greater accountability through transparency, that is, on what basis are core activities funded in some kind of equitable fashion, what's in and what's out in terms of core activities funded by the system at the local level and the need for more transparency at the local level, then maybe the question has been answered. But we're in your hands in terms of whether Mr Wright can add—

**Mr Wiseman:** I could go on for ever on this one, but I don't think that would be fair to my colleagues.

**Dr Pascal:** It was the issue of transparency in terms of expenditure.

**Mr Wiseman:** Yes, and the committee that is out reviewing that.

**The Chair:** Perhaps we might ask which of the school boards the auditor is auditing this year, because obviously that development of the last three or four years has raised the issues you're raising. The Provincial Auditor's examination has been to track moneys that have transferred to school boards to ensure that they were spent on the items as required. I recall some controversial computer packages that went to secondary instead of elementary in certain boards that should remain nameless. But there are several other issues around this.

**Mr Wiseman:** I raised this question with the auditor as well and he indicated to me that his jurisdiction in this matter is limited solely to the moneys that are being spent by the provincial government and that he is unable to audit a board, if I understood him correctly, in the spending of the money they raised through municipal taxes.

1710

**The Chair:** They don't do program audits per se; they don't do that depth of forensic audits, but perhaps we can get—

**Mr Peter Wright:** My name is Peter Wright. I am the



director of policy and programs in Education and Training. During the course of the work that the education and finance reform group was doing, they did collect some information on spending by board. The sort of key thing that is being worked on in education and finance reform, at least one of them, is this notion of trying to identify what boards are supposed to be spending on, because at the moment that is not well defined. The sort of accountability and transparency you're talking about are indeed things that we will be bringing forward in respect of education and finance reform.

**Mr Wiseman:** I'll be waiting to see that.

**Mr Beer:** I think we'll have a chance later to come back to some of the issues Mr Wiseman raised, but I'd like, just in terms of the time we have, if we could talk a bit about the labour-management issues. There are two things I'd like to raise, Minister.

One is, I'm sure—indeed I know—this has been brought to your attention because I believe you had a meeting with the Ontario Teachers' Federation a few weeks ago. I guess it really deals with the impact of the social contract and how it rests together with Bill 100—a number of concerns that have been raised in the east Parry Sound dispute that is under way. It's to do with the 60-day clause and, quite frankly, something I wasn't aware of before recent times, and I guess really is something that hasn't been used very often at all in the first 17 to 18 years of the existence of Bill 100.

The issue, as I understand it, is that after the fact-finder's report that a school board is able to make changes to a collective agreement, from the teachers' perspective in the current climate with the expenditure constraints and the social contract, this has been done—I'm not sure of the statistics—more this year than had been done in the previous time and it really is causing tremendous problems. It's the red flag in front of the bull.

In one article in the Windsor Star there was an interview with Tom Wells, a former Conservative Education minister who, in talking about why the clause was originally in, stated, or at least is quoted in the article as saying, that it was really seen as something that would be used—I'm quoting here—"as a very, very last resort."

I wonder, first of all, if you could just share with us your sense of not specifically individual areas that are having problems, but where this issues stands, how serious you think it is and what you see as your responsibility as minister in talking with both the teachers' federations and the boards to try to alleviate some of these pressures.

I think I would have to say, Minister, that the imposition of the social contract and the expenditure constraints, which are provincial policies, are ones that are certainly providing the framework for these discussions and I think there's a real worry that while at the present time we have the elementary and secondary teachers out in east Parry Sound, the elementary in Windsor, but there is the possibility of other strikes. I understand there may be a visit by some teachers next week to the Legislature to discuss this.

Could you perhaps share with us what you discussed

with the federations at the end of October on this specific issue and what you think can be done to alleviate this specific problem in terms of the relationships between the boards and the federations?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** First of all, let me say, when you were making your opening comments, you referred to Lambton, Windsor and east Parry Sound and tied those three very nicely together and tied them to the expenditure control program, the social contract. You should be very clear that even the teachers in Lambton did not tie the social contract or the ECP to the problems that existed there.

In Windsor, I know the circumstances reasonably well. The board set its budget early on this year, before the social contract or the expenditure control program was even talked about publicly, and it budgeted for a reduction in compensation to all of its teachers and then came out and put minus 10% on the table right away. So it's convenient for the board there now to be saying that this relates to the ECP and the social contract; the fact is that this was dreamed up by the Windsor board before there was even such a program announced or worked on by the provincial government.

So I don't think that you should in all of these cases just make the assumption that because there's an expenditure control program and the social contract, this is what's driving this very serious and difficult situation across the province.

There have been some suggestions that were made, not in any great detail, by the federations in regular meetings that I have with them. I must say I'm quite reluctant to consider opening up Bill 100. I know exactly what will happen. I think the boards and the teachers would be somewhat reluctant to open up Bill 100 as well. When you're in the midst of a difficult and serious labour relations problem in the education field, as we are right now, I'm not sure that is the best time to be making reforms in the legislation that governs labour relations. What's the saying? Bad laws are made out of crisis situations. I've explained that. I've certainly put that position forward to the federations, that I'm reluctant to open up Bill 100.

I also know that you guys and the Conservatives, if there's an amendment to Bill 100, we'll come into the House, we'll have lengthy debate at second reading, we'll go out for public hearings and we'll travel the province on public hearings. In every area of the province where there's been a labour dispute in the last five years, we will have calls for the elimination of the right to strike, and that's something I'm not willing to entertain. I'm very firmly in favour of the right to strike. I think it has served labour relations well in the education field since it was brought in under Bill 100 back in the 1970s. So there was some suggestion; it wasn't anything that was given to me in writing.

I think the federations are very concerned, and I know that the trustees' organizations are concerned as well. We've somehow got to be able to work together to find some solutions in the next short period of time. This is not helpful to public confidence in public education, and I think boards should seriously consider what they're

doing in some of the circumstances across the province, and teachers should consider their response too. Some of the boards have financial difficulties that have to be jointly addressed.

**Mr Beer:** I appreciate your comments. I would simply say as well that it's always been my position when we talk about the right to strike that you have to look at what the other options are. If you go back to the debate in 1975 when the Conservatives brought that in, I think a lot of the same arguments still apply. There may be problems, but by and large that bill has served us well, and if it isn't there, there were so many other things that went on prior to 1975 that can really exacerbate relations. So I'm not arguing here that that is necessarily the answer.

I think, though, that what we have had is that you had to bring in a specific bill with respect to Lambton, and I'm sure you would prefer not to have to bring in even one more, let alone perhaps half a dozen or 10. I don't think any government does. But in the Lambton situation, one of the things—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** It was made a little easier in Lambton—I say this particularly looking at some of the people sitting out there—because the OSSTF supported the bringing in of back-to-work legislation in Lambton.  
1720

**Mr Beer:** I appreciate that, but again I guess the issue I'm after is that we can sit and talk about the expenditure controls, the social contract, the change in the transfer payments, and we can have an interesting sort of political exchange. But where we're at right now, if I listen to trustees and teachers, is that there is a real concern around a kind of building explosion out there, and I think there is a provincial responsibility.

I understand that when one talks about collective bargaining, one has to say, "Look, you have the two parties; they need to be brought together to try to resolve that." But if there is a period of time in terms of this 60 days, and that seems to be really the crux of the issue, what I'm asking you is, do you see it then as something where you should be bringing together the representatives from the Ontario public school boards, the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the constituent federations, to sit down and try to at least come to some kind of accord for the duration of the social contract?

I agree with you that clearly there are those out there who will see this in perhaps simplistic terms and just say, "Eliminate the right to strike and that will solve all the problems." I don't agree with that; you don't; I think most people in the educational field wouldn't agree with that. But I think we also know that if we got into a situation where there were perhaps three or four or a half-dozen strikes in the province, the pressure on you, let alone on the rest of us, to act—and as you say, sometimes in those situations approaches are taken which one doesn't like.

So it really is, what kinds of things do you think you can be doing, you ought to be doing, you're planning to be doing to try to see that what is happening right now can be limited to those areas?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I'm somewhat reluctant to say too much more on this because I don't want any signals to be read by anybody that anything else other than settlements at the local level should be achieved.

You will appreciate that if I say the wrong thing in here, then there might be a signal to the boards of East Parry Sound and Windsor that—"Well, let's wait," and that's not the message that should be read out of today. The message that should be read out of today is—and I was very disturbed to see the chair, I think, of the East Parry Sound Board of Education on TV on the weekend saying, "We're ready to go to arbitration." In other words, the board isn't going to take on the responsibility for negotiating an agreement. "We'll wait until somebody sends us to arbitration." That's not helpful.

I don't want to send any of the wrong signals out of here today. To the two areas where strikes are occurring right now in the province, the message should be: "Get back to the bargaining table. This isn't good for public education."

I do, though, agree with one of the concerns you've expressed, and that is that if this continues across the province—and I have said this to other people—there will be a much louder call for the removal of the right to strike. That will be a natural response out of having seven, eight, nine, 10 strikes in the province. That should be something we're all concerned about, because I agree with you that Bill 100 has served the province well and anybody who would try to reverse that I think would see labour relations turned back 50 or 60 years in the education field and all sorts of strikes that would occur in school boards across the province. But that won't stop some from calling for that, and I think the boards and the teachers as well as the ministry have to be concerned about that.

**Mr Beer:** Just one final point on that.

**The Chair:** On that point, and then I'd like to move to Ms Haack.

**Mr Beer:** Could I just leave with you, then—and again I understand your hesitancy to get involved directly where you may be sending this or that message to one side or the other—simply that there may be a need for the minister to bring together the leadership to really sit down and say, "Look, here are the implications of this going on."

I think, in fairness to the other parties, I would still argue that given government actions over the last couple of years, whether in terms of expenditure controls, social contract or changes in the transfer payments, and with the demands that government makes that certain programs be done, that has added to the problem, whether it's specifically expenditure control or social contract.

But I think that in raising this today, it is really to say that I'm quite concerned as I talk to trustees and to the leaders in the federations that we need to come to some understanding around this 60-day question fairly quickly or we could find in 1994 that would be extremely messy.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I can certainly tell you that this is occupying a lot of our time and certainly is number one in terms of the priorities that I have. We cannot allow



chaos to develop in the public education system, and I will not allow it to happen. Options will be looked at, and no matter what the political consequences are, we will not allow chaos to develop in the public education system, period.

**Ms Haeck:** I really appreciate some of the comments on a range of topics so far. I had an opportunity to speak to a college instructor last week while we were off and doing our constituency work. I asked him how things were going, and he sort of rolled his eyes. So I asked him a number of things about the classroom, and one of the things that is of concern out there, and I know it has been there for some while, particularly with regard to the college system, relates to remediation.

The universities have undertaken to assist students who have left the high school to basically become better readers and writers, thereby ensuring some chances of success in that post-secondary endeavour.

Colleges have been, I would say, a little less inclined to undertake that, partly because—at least when I was on the board at Niagara College, the comment was, “Well, the legislation says we take everyone, and we don’t get into the remediation.” The health sciences prep courses are the exception that I’m aware of.

This particular teacher that I was talking to last week raised the concern that he is seeing in his English classes levels of reading and writing at grade 4 as well as, then, people who have university degrees. He is finding this an extreme challenge to meet and obviously has some concern on behalf of the students as well for their ability to succeed in their educational courses.

So I’m wondering at this point what discussions or plans there might be in the ministry to deal with outcomes at the post-secondary level, particularly in the colleges, if those discussions have been ongoing. I know they were there when I was in the ministry two years ago, so I’m wondering if they are continuing.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** If I might, if the deputy would comment.

**Dr Pascal:** I’ll make a few comments and then perhaps Peter Wright can fill in as well.

My experience with the colleges, which predates my current position, has certainly led me to a different conclusion about what’s taking place in the colleges in terms of guaranteeing success. I’m not saying “guarantee” in the contractual sense—

**Ms Haeck:** No, I understand what you mean.

**Dr Pascal:** —but doing things that are designed to increase the probability that with respect to inputs—that is, dealing with what students are coming to college with and dealing with them as they are—the colleges have been a place of innovation for a number of years. Not to deny at all the member’s concern as expressed by a particular teacher, and there probably is tons more to do, but things like pre-college diagnostic testing and remedial loops that deal with gaps between what’s necessary to compete towards certain outcomes in a class are being done in many of the colleges. Peer teaching and counselling: there are innovations around the college system in terms of that kind of support.

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The schools-college project: Many of the schools-to-college articulation agreements around the province are designed to bring the outcomes—we use the word “outcome” a lot in terms of our hopes in the name of accountability for all parts of our kind of non-system of educational opportunities as it is right now—closer together in terms of the outcomes of a secondary school and the prerequisites required for successful participation in either university or college. Through those articulation agreements, there’s a lot of school-board-to-college activity and the schools-college project is designed to bring a lot of research to bear in terms of good practice and some of the problems you’ve identified about that.

**Ms Haeck:** I just have another point to raise. There are a lot of students going back into various educational institutions because of obviously the unemployment situation that we find ourselves in across the country, not only in Ontario. As a result of that, you’ve got people who may have spent some time in the workforce who are making a range of choices by going back into the college stream and they may not have the advantage of the articulation agreements that you’re talking about.

**Dr Pascal:** This is, and the minister referred to it in his earlier remarks, a prior learning assessment. It’s not just ameliorating the deficits in terms of prerequisites for somebody coming into a program; it’s also catching learners having learned something before and having done something right elsewhere. That’s where prior learning assessment is incredibly important in the experimentation that’s being led by the Council of Regents that is now beginning to bear fruit. It’s important in that regard.

Maybe Mr Wright would like to add to that as well.

**Mr Wright:** I would add two points. First is that the ministry introduced, about three or four years ago, a remediation fund for the colleges. If my memory serves me, it’s around \$4 million, which colleges are given to help develop remediation programs for students. Particularly in reading and math, most of the work has been done. There have been things, as the deputy has mentioned, such as counselling, peer tutoring, self-directed learning packages done as well.

In terms of language proficiency, the colleges have also been working on a standardized benchmark set of competencies, so that when students come in, they can be given these tests and then we will be able to identify what level of remediation is actually required.

The final thing, which the deputy actually had mentioned already, is prior learning assessment. When a student has gone through that exercise, they will then have identified which particular areas the student may need additional work in before he can proceed or as he proceeds in his program.

**Ms Haeck:** Can I just follow up on that prior learning assessment, because this particular teacher mentioned that as well, with I have to say a fair bit of concern. The suggestion was that someone’s just going to come in and say, “Well, hey, I can do this. I don’t have to be tested in this particular area,” this sense that the kind of standards



that we've all been trying to set are basically going to be compromised by that particular exercise.

**Dr Pascal:** As with any innovation that is quite different from the way we've been doing business as learning organizations, the rigour that will be applied in terms of a student presenting a portfolio of work and the kind of diagnostic testing that will be required to get credit will have to be quite rigorous; otherwise the kind of concern that your friend or colleague may have will be well founded. We certainly appreciate that.

Again, with respect to a college located in Oshawa where my son began in September, he received a pre-requisite skill learning package to fill out in a self-instructional way a month and a half before he began, got results about three or four weeks before he began and was turned around very quickly with advice. I won't go into real detail, because I don't want to breach the confidentiality of anyone, including my own son.

**Ms Haec:** I appreciate the information and I'll make sure it is given to this gentleman so that he feels some assurance about what's coming down the pipe, or at least that there is a range of options for him and his students. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Wright. I don't know why the deputy is concerned about that. I recall, sitting in a select committee on education, hearing at length an intimate letter written to his child on the occasion of their birth.

**Dr Pascal:** That was my daughter, not my son.

**The Chair:** That's right. Just something this deputy parent likes to do.

**Mr McGuinty:** I wanted to ask a question arising from something Mr Mackay had stated earlier. Perhaps he could come forward again. That was in connection with the OSAP loans. If I understood him correctly, since 1988 the province has handed out loans totalling \$580 million and only \$2 million had been written off. Is that correct?

**Mr Mackay:** No, \$12 million.

**Mr McGuinty:** I'm sorry. That clears it up.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Since 1978.

**Mr Beer:** That's 2%.

**The Chair:** There's nothing in those books; it just gives you a tremendous sense of confidence having them.

**Dr Pascal:** There's nothing in them.

**The Chair:** Exactly.

**Mr McGuinty:** I wanted to ask the minister as well, there has been talk of late of colleges and universities being deregulated and some people point to the program at Queen's, the proposal put forward by Queen's to privatize its MBA program, as something of the tip of the iceberg, which would lead us to see, I guess, a two-tier system of university-level education in the province. I'm wondering what the minister's position about that concept is generally and specifically with respect to the Queen's proposal.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** When you talk about deregulated, you're talking about tuition deregulation?

**Mr McGuinty:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** First of all, start from the first point. We don't intend to deregulate tuitions. We've made that clear to the Council of Ontario Universities. We will not be deregulating tuitions.

The second point on the Queen's program, as I understand it at this point, it's at the very, very early stages of consideration at the university. This has not gone through any of the approvals process at Queen's University, and it's not something that we need to be overly concerned about at the ministry at this point, because it's an idea at the university that has a long way to go before it can be considered something that the university at the approvals level is seriously considering. I don't want to overreact to the concept of privatization of the MBA program at Queen's University.

If they did that, and I personally would not want to see that happen, that means there would be zero dollars from the provincial level going into that program; it would be completely unsubsidized; it would lack any subsidy at all from the provincial government. That would be the approach they would be taking, so it would have to be 100% full cost recovery, which is different from the concept of deregulating tuitions and allowing provincial money to continue to flow to universities and the universities just setting the tuitions on their own of whatever their institution thinks the market will bear for them. They're really somewhat separate issues, related but separate.

**Mr McGuinty:** You don't feel any need then to comment with respect to the proposal, as to whether you think it's a good thing for the province?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I think I already indicated just a couple of minutes ago that I personally hoped it wouldn't happen. I've been reminded many, many, many times in the short period of time that I've been in this portfolio by the university sector that they are fiercely independent, autonomous institutions and will make decisions on their own. That's the tradition in this province and every other province, and we should respect that and I will respect it.

But I can still have a personal opinion, and my personal opinion is that I wouldn't want to see that happen. I don't think that type of an approach is appropriate for accessibility to our post-secondary system.

**Mr McGuinty:** Do you have some sense as to what proportion of costs a student should be picking up at university? Right now, I understand their tuition approximates 20% of the whole cost.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Yes. It's a little bit higher now: 15% for colleges and about 22% or 23% for universities now.  
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**Mr McGuinty:** Do you have an ideal percentage in mind, something we should be moving towards?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** We're right now, as you know, reviewing tuition policy in the province, so for me to say that I thought 25% or 24% or 30% was appropriate would be easily and quickly calculated as to what that meant in terms of tuition increase. That would be the assumption of what we were going to do. We haven't made a decision. We're reviewing options in the ministry

and expect to have a decision made by the end of the year.

**Mr Beer:** I'd like to raise some questions on the funding initiative, particularly around what you're doing in the ministry. First of all, is it your intention to bring forward a bill in the spring of 1994 or the fall of 1994? Is that your intention? Could I just ask you that first? Is that the end of this?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** At this point, we've worked in the secretariat, as you know, with trustees and everybody else. Some ideas are there. The only reason I can't give you a clear answer is that I have to go to my cabinet. I have to go to my caucus with some ideas. They will make a determination. I certainly will be presenting some options to my cabinet and caucus colleagues.

**Mr Beer:** Would it be fair to say that one of the things you'd be considering would perhaps be a white paper, a green paper of some sort, as part of that process? What I'm after here is that we know we're going to have the report of the Fair Tax Commission in a few weeks. I think one of the things we need is kind of having a lot of the approaches on the table. What are the options? I think that would be useful.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** If we're to proceed, I don't think we could proceed without putting out some kind of—and I don't mean for a long, protracted period of time—discussion document, some of which, I think we could probably indicate, would already have been pretty firmed up. We would be consulting on technical aspects and other parts of it would be opened up for discussion.

While we've had a lot of consultation in the secretariat, it's been fairly closed in terms of the public hasn't been involved and not all trustees and teachers have been involved. I think we would have to send out some kind of a document and provide for a broader input into the policy.

**Mr Beer:** In terms of some of the fundamental principles that you think ought to be applied, what we have right now, we know, is the creation of history with the property tax and then the provincial taxes, the growth of the separate system, obviously, after 1984 and the pressures that exist right now which, while in part I suppose are separate board-public board, more fundamentally and increasingly are assessment-rich and assessment-poor.

Would you see, as part of the proposals you would want to bring forward, changes that would be directed towards each student; that there should be a level of support provided, regardless of whether one was within a separate or public, or assessment-rich or assessment-poor, but a clearer system of providing that support and probably fewer additional kinds of programs for special areas, but none the less perhaps looking at some of Metro's special needs through that way, in the same way one might look at distance problems in the north through certain kinds of special grants?

Do you have a sense now, after the time you've been there, that we can tinker with the system and it will work all right, or that we really are looking at fundamental change?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I think there has to be some fundamental change. There is significant inequity in the province in terms of resources that are available for our kids.

Aside from the labour relations problems you were talking about earlier, another very difficult area that we have in the ministry right now is the boards. They're having some financial problems, deficits, not related, as you know, to the social contract or the ECP. These are difficulties with lack of adequate resources in their own commercial and industrial base. I think it's something where we have to try to look at some fundamental change, but we also have to balance that with what is possible.

I don't want to propose something that brings about so much public concern or opposition that it's not possible to implement it. We have to look at some common sense used and how quickly it can be done and what's acceptable. I think the trustees' organizations that have worked with the secretariat have come to grips with some of that as well.

I know of your interest and your support in education finance reform, but then when you get to the bottom line on it, that's a little bit of what the \$44 million was with Metro. I didn't detect any levels of support from either of the opposition parties when it came to trying to share some of the wealth of the Metropolitan Toronto school system, through the social contract, with the broader public either. So I know that while we'll probably all agree on the principles, I certainly will hope that you might be more supportive on education finance reform than you were on sharing Metro's wealth.

**Mr Beer:** If I can just—

**The Chair:** We have time for debate.

**Mr Beer:** I think there are two things here. I would agree and would say to the minister that I think one of the most important things with the funding changes is that we know, that we're not surprised, that we don't get blindsided, especially if we get proposals that really are very new and different and where, as you know, having been on both sides of the House, governments have gestation time to develop policies, to think them through. But when they hit, the play in the first few days may be critical in terms of one's understanding of what it is and how to respond. Part of the answer is that we share that.

With respect to Metro Toronto, this is tied up in part, obviously, to the social contract negotiations and discussions and how that came about and how it is proposed that those moneys—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** But the suggestion that was made by some people, that what should happen to the \$44 million in Metropolitan Toronto is to lower property taxes in Metropolitan Toronto for the public school ratepayers, is directly contrary to any concept of education finance reform, because you know that would have exactly the opposite impact on the Catholic school board of Metropolitan Toronto and would drive the—

**Mr Beer:** I appreciate that but again, with respect, in developing educational reform, I don't think the social contract is the vehicle to—



**Hon Mr Cooke:** I think the principle's there in terms of sharing the resources and I'm going to use every line of defence I can find.

**Mr Beer:** No question on the principles. But again, even when one sits down with the Metropolitan Separate School Board and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, there are some areas where I see a number of the issues in a similar way. Indeed, what we're identifying now are some particular issues that are really relevant to Metropolitan Toronto, whether it's Metro separate, Metro public, and I wouldn't drag that in, in terms of what we're going to be looking at.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Certainly in terms of process, I can assure you that as we get further down the road in terms of our thinking and as soon as I possibly can—I haven't taken everything to cabinet yet—you and anybody else in your caucus, and certainly the same for the Conservative critic, will be invited to come over for a full briefing to give you our latest thinking before a discussion paper goes out.

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**The Chair:** It's not like a landfill or anything. We're talking about education here.

**Mr Beer:** Yes, I appreciate that. It's just that with this issue, as it was with Bill 30, there's nothing like education to really potentially tear at the fabric of the Ontario strand, if I can call it that way, and this one will be critical. We'll have one shot at it. It's one of those issues, I think, that comes along perhaps once in a generation where you have an opportunity to do something. I think we would want to work with you in doing that—Mrs Cunningham has expressed the same thing—and we'll take you up on that offer.

**Ms Haack:** I'm sorely tempted to deal with landfill issues, but I'm not going to. Having sat on Bill 143, I know I can expound at length on the merits of the minister's proposal.

**The Chair:** The members of the House would like to hear more, that's for sure.

**Ms Haack:** However, I will restrain myself and continue with a comment about violence in our schools.

We had discussion among some people after one of the Remembrance Day parades I was attending. We were reminded of our wonderful days at school and how nasty we were as students occasionally, but it is brought home by various media reports, and I believe there was one this weekend on CBC Radio again, about things happening in our schools.

I'm wondering if you are able to comment on what you're aware of as the situation here in Ontario, because I think sometimes the reports are somewhat exaggerated—and yet I don't think we have a firm handle on all of the statistics—and what, if anything, at this point the ministry has discussed and is able to divulge to us here.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** At this point I'm not sure whether the reports are exaggerated or not, but I certainly know there's the perception and perhaps the reality that there are more incidents of violence in our schools now than there have been in the past. Certainly there's more coverage of it.

It's not just Metro. I was up in northwestern Ontario a couple of weeks ago, in Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout and Fort Frances, and in each of those communities it was raised. I did a radio phone-in show. That was virtually the only topic they wanted to talk about, with the exception of—I think we spent the first few minutes talking about the new federal cabinet. I don't know why people would phone about that, but they did.

So it's not just a Metro issue. In a way, I'm quite thankful that it isn't, because I think the ministry needs to show some leadership. Too often the response outside Metropolitan Toronto is that everything that is done in the Ministry of Education is—"Well, you're doing it for Metro Toronto." This is a province-wide issue, and I think there's a consensus that it's a province-wide issue.

We don't have a good handle on the statistics. There's not a reporting mechanism to the ministry, and that's one of the first things we talked about in the ministry. We've now given some direction to school boards about reporting to police and getting police involved when they appropriately should be involved, but I think we have to get a better handle on the statistics.

We have to get an agreement across the province that there's this concept of zero tolerance, but what does that actually mean and can we actually implement it?

The questions of Scarborough policies: If you go ahead with zero tolerance and a child who brings a weapon into the school is then expelled, what is the long-term impact of expelling that student? One of the articles in the newspaper on the weekend was suggesting that we're actually creating the potential for gangs of expelled kids to come back into the school system and cause problems because we've expelled them. We really have to look at this and not look for simple solutions.

But it's an urgent problem. The secretariat has been working on a specific policy for a bit of time now, and I expect to review it shortly. I was hoping we'd have something by the end of November, but I don't think we will. We're not going to just put out a policy for the sake of putting out a policy. We want to make sure there's something there that people can talk about that will work and is credible.

**Ms Haack:** If I can add one supplementary to this, I think many of us are convinced there is some linkage of racism to the violence in the school issue. I have at least seen one incident myself as a result of being there for a speaking engagement of the separation of the black students from the white students. They did this on their own, because obviously there was a sense that they were not getting along. One doesn't expect to see that in St Catharines.

I'm wondering to what degree anti-racism policies are being fleshed out. Again, one tends to think of it as more a Toronto issue, but it isn't; it's obviously all across the province, dealing with a range of groups.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** The Legislature passed Bill 21 in July 1992. Coming out of that was a policy memorandum to school boards requiring school boards to develop anti-racist policies. We sent out some guidelines and some time lines to the boards whereby they must submit their



policies to us. Under Bill 21, we have to approve of those policies.

There are a number of boards in this community and elsewhere that have developed policies long before we ever thought of Bill 21, so lots of good work has been done. But there needs to be more consistency and we need to beef up the policies across the province. We've dealt as well under this with the questions of curriculum and, to some extent, employment equity in the teaching field, so access to our teachers' colleges.

**Mr Beer:** Can I just do a supplementary on that, just while we're on the topic? The other thing, just to note, you mentioned about Bill 21. If I recall, in our discussion in Bill 4 last spring, one of the issues that came up—because part of the changes there were around the power by the board, by the school, to expel or to suspend a student for a certain period of time, and then that could be continued, but there would be a certain process.

One of the things that the committee did in discussing that bill was to look at, then what is the responsibility to, in effect, try to direct that student? This isn't in all cases violent acts; there may be others. But it seems to me it's still part of the solution, which is in many cases parents, even an older student or guardian, are not aware of what are the supports in the community that are going to be able to help that student.

I believe that what we've put into the act in effect was an obligation that the board in some way, through the principal or superintendent—that one of the things that would have to happen to a student who is expelled for a longer period of time is that those supports would have to be identified and ways found to bring the student in contact with that.

I raise that. I know we don't have time to continue here, but I think it really does then speak to that broader issue around how we integrate a whole series of services, especially in these difficult times. If these kids are out of school, what happens then? That doesn't mean that the problem has gone away; it has just moved off the school campus. Yet as a society we've got to come to grips with it.

**The Chair:** I just want to make a brief comment. I'll use some prerogative of the Chair. But I recall OSSTF and the secondary principals' association invited a representative from each of the three caucuses to respond to the question, what is the single largest challenge for education in the new decade? I believe it was 1990, just

prior to the last election, because Karl Morin-Strom represented your caucus and I think Sterling Campbell spoke for the Liberals at that session and I spoke for the Tories.

I had indicated that I thought violence was the largest single challenge, the toughest one, and three days later, a student at General Brock High School in my community walked in with a gun and shot a student and put three people in hospital. But when I was revisiting that speech some time ago, I recalled that one of the buzzwords we were working with was "prevention," and nobody seems to be looking at the angles of prevention and program that we're teaching in our schools. One of the things that one of the committees of this Legislature looked at was ADR, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. There's a whole wonderful body of knowledge around its application in schools.

The United States did this out of necessity, because down there they're losing kids and teachers at an alarming rate. But I think it's ironic that the President of the United States has given an award to a Toronto school for showing leadership in this, yet our own government or our own ministry is not pursuing it.

It does change the paradigm of power structures and unions and the labour movement and some of their curriculum needs. But frankly, if we're looking at teaching mediation to young people, maybe it'll work in the school classroom instead of a principal, an authoritarian person, hitting them with expulsion. It has ideological implications, but it empowers young people to deal with conflict in their own families, gender power and so on.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Yes, but with all due respect, the ministry is doing work in that area. There's been a considerable amount of work done. There are several school boards that are involved. We don't run the school boards, but we've been working with the school boards in developing policy in this field. The reason why we have some leadership in the province is, I think, because the ministry over the years has provided that leadership. So it's not entirely accurate.

**The Chair:** It wasn't meant as a criticism; it was meant as a suggestion. You do have power over curriculum.

This committee stands adjourned, to reconvene tomorrow immediately following routine proceedings or 3:30, whichever comes first.

The committee adjourned at 1802.

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Peter Wright, director, policy and programs branch, postsecondary institutions division

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**\*Wiseman, Jim** (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

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Martin, Tony (Sault Ste Marie ND) for Mr Abel

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**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 17 November 1993**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Ministry of Education and Training**

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 17 novembre 1993**

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des dépenses**

**Ministère de l'Éducation et  
de la Formation**

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 17 November 1993

The committee met at 1541 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We have five hours and four minutes remaining to complete the Ministry of Education and Training estimates. However, we will plan to finish by 6 o'clock today, so I will need a few moments for seven votes at the end of today's session, since we have to report to the House tomorrow.

At this point, unless there were any outstanding questions that came from yesterday's hearings that the minister or the deputy wished to respond to, I'd like to recognize Ms Cunningham.

**Mrs Dianne Cunningham (London North):** I'd like to begin by saying that I wasn't here yesterday and missed hearing the minister first hand. He hates it when I quote from other things and I don't listen to him directly. It was great that I got his remarks this morning, so I've had an opportunity to look at them and I commend him for the initiatives that he feels are important; there's no doubt in my mind.

However, in spite of that, although we agree on some of the priorities for change—because I think he talked a lot about that, the need for change—I will be making some remarks that I hope will be helpful today with regard to education in the context of his remarks, quite frankly, as opposed to perhaps the real reason for being here, and hope that we can continue to work together.

I'm going to start, Mr Chairman, if you don't mind, and take 30 seconds. I asked a question in the House today, and it was by no means that I agreed with the article I was asking about; I just didn't know. That was the intent. If the minister thought I was trying to raise unrealistic, I suppose, expectations on behalf of students in the light that there would be yet another roadblock this year, that wasn't my intent. It was an opportunity—

**Hon David S. Cooke (Minister of Education and Training):** It just had been a while since I'd had a question.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I know. It showed. I can't promise you I'm going to keep you experienced by asking questions all the time. There's a big argument as to who gets questions on. But today there wasn't and it was—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** See, when we were in opposition, education was always put up at the top.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I remember that. I also remember what the questions were and what stands you took, which is extremely helpful to me these days.

Anyway, you can see that people try to work together in this province, and we'll continue to do that. I really appreciate the fact that the minister took the time to read our document. I think in some instances he's acted on some of the things that we thought were important, and I appreciate that.

I'm just going to put my remarks on the record now. I have a copy of them, so if anybody needs them down the road, they're most welcome to them.

In my view, 1993-94 has seen a flurry of government action in the education field. The government has announced a royal commission to undertake a full review of Ontario's education system and a parent council to reassure parents that the ministry does care about their views on how their children should be educated. We've seen the introduction of mandatory destreaming of grade 9 students and the passage of legislation to mandate junior kindergarten. Special education programs have been permanently changed with the removal of the hard-to-serve provisions from the act, despite the fact that the ministry cannot ensure that programs for all of Ontario's exceptional pupils will be in place. The government's proceeding with the introduction of the Common Curriculum despite its unpopularity.

I feel we should be looking for a new document there. I'm going to really try to leave some time before I have to leave to make a speech in London so the minister can respond to some of the things that he finds probably are, in his view, not correct or controversial on my part.

Violence in schools is on the rise and we have an unprecedented number of school days lost to strikes since September. Some may argue with that. I think we get our numbers from the same source, so I think I'm correct.

Post-secondary education has also been challenging, and the government has addressed equity issues associated with governing bodies, but has failed to recognize that universities and colleges are in financial decline. Today I raised yet another equity issue around a survey I didn't know about and was looking for his information on.

The only solution the government offers right now is significant tuition fee increases. We've been on the side of tuition fee increases, but not as the only solution. The definition, of course, of "significant" has yet to be determined by all of us, but it certainly has been determined by the students.

Training programs are said to be imperative for our economic future, I think by everyone, but they're rarely mentioned with the province's preoccupation with the establishment of the OTAB—I'd like to say board but I have to say bureaucracy—because of the process that most of us were subjected to for public input. The promised regulations for the LTABs have not emerged, and I hope the minister will put that down as a priority, because we do have people who are extremely valuable to the system that we should hope to keep there, and we have some LTABs that are working very well and we should be using them as models.

The promised streamlining and efficient delivery of programming is not evident, and we just have to ask workers over the age of 45 about the responsiveness of

POWA—the acronym there—and the Transitions programs. The minister may want to speak to those, but I would hope he would speak to other things first.

The Jobs Ontario Training program is extremely controversial, and despite projections that 100,000 jobs would be created in three years, the program was only able to deliver 7,573 jobs in its first year of operation. I heard the question today, by the way, and the new numbers. Employers openly admit in the press that the jobs would have been created anyway and that they would be fools to pass up on the government's so-called training subsidy. We've all read those statements, and I have received letters on them, which I have passed on to the ministry.

Anti-racket investigators from the OPP are looking for \$770,000 missing from the Jobs Ontario program at the Brant Community Development Agency. On any of these things, I hope the minister, if he feels I'm out of line, can speak to them. The government also gave \$67,000 to a former drug dealer in St Catharines. I suppose we're in such a rush some days to spend money and get our programs up that the checks and references are not put in place the way they ought to be. Frankly, it's a relief some days that the Provincial Auditor is reviewing the program.

Despite all this activity, the most significant aspect of fiscal 1993-94 was the expenditure control plan and the social contract. The expenditure control plan cut \$635.6 million from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Training. I will give the credit to the minister that he recognized there was a real need to get our books in order. It will result, however, in a loss of 224 full-time positions. The social contract cut a further \$425 million from school boards and \$130 million from colleges and universities.

The fiscal crisis of the province made the introduction of tough measures imperative, and again I'll give the credit to the minister. However, the government's plan has led to an administrative nightmare, and hundreds of hours are dedicated to negotiating sectoral agreements that in the end resulted in salary cuts.

I might go so far as to say that I think it is because of the social contract right now that some of our school boards are finding themselves either not understanding what the intent of the minister was or not believing the financial responsibilities of the school boards, that we're finding them, I think, taking the worst form of getting attention, and that is entering into strikes. I know the minister would agree that students should be in school.

I think the ministry, in its negotiations on the social contract, expected that everybody would work together. They had to come up with some concessions as well, and I would hope that school boards and teachers would understand that this is a special year and that a lot of people are going to have to give things up.

The element of society that we're all worried about is people who don't have a job, and it's really hurtful to them. I spent yesterday in southwestern Ontario and in some of those areas, ending up in Sarnia, where there is not a lot of respect for people who choose not to work, who have a job, in any area of society today.

Despite the frenzied activity, the government does not appear to have a clear focus about where it is heading in education. I'll try to explain that statement, because it isn't a positive one.

#### 1550

It's been estimated that as many as half the jobs opening up by the end of the next century will require specialized skills and knowledge. Today's students will need specialized skills to meet the challenges of the 1990s, and the ability to learn new skills and acquire more knowledge throughout their lives to meet the challenges of the next century. For this reason, we certainly believe that our future prosperity will depend on the quality of education and training we can provide today.

That, in the eyes of the public, has been a very strong statement made to myself and my colleagues as we have received input in our constituency offices from the constituents we represent and as we've travelled throughout the province of Ontario dealing with what I think is one of the most important issues in society today, the future of our education.

Unfortunately, in their view, our education system does not appear to be making the grade, and it isn't good enough to say that that's always been the view of the public. We believe there have to be changes, and I think the minister himself said that in his presentation to the standing committee yesterday. I commend him for his observations. He's obviously very much aware of what the public expects and what the changes have to be.

Unfortunately, as I say, we're not making the grade. Ontario students perform below many other industrialized nations and provinces on international mathematics and science tests. Whenever I talk about this, I use the ministry's own data; I don't use other data.

First-year university and community college students are enrolled in remedial programs to improve their inadequate literacy skills. That's something the ministry should be looking at: Why?

The dropout rate, which Statistics Canada places at 17%—which has always been controversial, which number we use; we're thankful there for a new counting system—is still unacceptably high, given the fact that Employment and Immigration Canada projects that by the year 2000 almost half of all the new jobs—this is so important; it's hard for us to understand this—created will require more than five years of education beyond high school. We're seeing it in our students now, who need university degrees to get into some of our community college programs.

I'm sure it's a surprise to all of us when somebody comes to us and says, "I have to go to a community college." I'm not saying that's good or bad. Actually, I think it's probably a good thing. But the fact of the matter is that we're seeing it is a reality that students are having to go beyond the five years of high school.

Given the level of expenditure on education and training in this province, these figures are distressing. I'm now talking about the 17% dropout rate, and I'm talking about the first-year university and community college



students who are enrolled in remedial programs.

We believe that it's time for a new direction in education and I know the minister does as well. That's why over two years ago we began work on policy proposals and ideas to reform the education system. We examined the strengths and weaknesses of the system through the eyes of students, parents, teachers, the employment community and others. Based on our consultations, we released our policy paper, *New Directions, Volume Two: A Blueprint for Learning in Ontario*. It outlined concrete proposals for renewal based on the principles of excellence, opportunity and accountability. I don't think we can ever ignore those principles.

Thousands of Ontarians have ordered a copy of our 40-page document and the orders keep coming in. Thousands have attended our community-based town hall meetings and answered our questions or sent in detailed letters with further policy ideas. We have participated in education panel discussions all across the province. The high participation level and enthusiasm of the response demonstrates how long it has been since a political party, or maybe a government, has asked individual Ontarians for their thoughts and ideas. I'll speak to the commission in a little while. Not everyone agreed with our ideas, but they all asked us for the opportunity to have input into the policy development process.

The idea has really caught on. The federal Liberal Party released its red book during the election, which in many instances mirrored our apprenticeship proposals. I think possibly it mirrored them because there isn't anybody who doesn't agree, including the former Liberal government in this province, that apprenticeship programs have to be totally overhauled.

The Premier's Council has made those statements, certainly while we've all been here in this House, during the last five years and before. Even the provincial wing of the Liberal Party, they've advised me, has concluded, at a weekend policy conference, that they too should let Ontarians know where they stand on the issues, and that's good. I think more than ever before, the voters are looking to government and political parties that are providing solutions, and they want to know where we stand.

With the announcement of the Royal Commission on Learning, on May 4, 1993, it appears the NDP had decided at that time that public consultation is essential. However, it's a late start, and because the final report is not due until the fall of 1994, no action can be taken during its mandate. I see the minister shaking his head. He wants to talk about that. That's fine; that's why I'm raising the issue.

Let's go into the royal commission. Governments generally announce royal commissions when they're unsure about which direction they should take. If that's the case, I question why this government continues to tinker with its piecemeal pet projects. Grade 9 students will be the guinea pigs as they must suffer the experimentation of destreaming and the Common Curriculum, both of which I'm not in support of—neither is my party, and I don't think the school systems are either—based on education outcomes.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** You'd be surprised.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I don't think I am surprised.

I am surprised to know and I'm happy to know that a lot of destreaming has not taken place in grade 9 across the province this year—with ministry approval, I might add. Where courses and classes have been streamed in the past and where those teachers and school boards have been able to prove to the ministry that they're extremely important and successful, they haven't been asked to destream them, and I give the minister and the ministry credit for that. Where things are working, we shouldn't be getting in the way.

Demonstrable acquisition of knowledge and skills is obviously something that the NDP has to put into its education philosophy. Perhaps they are when they approve programs that are already streamed in our school systems in September. They're starting to look at what's happening out there and working in a positive way.

The fact that the royal commission could recommend that the province introduce a standardized curriculum and standardized testing is not considered. Why not introduce continual change? Teachers would be thrilled. That's the kind of thing we need.

The other major agenda item that has been removed from the royal commission's plate is the issue of education finance reform. When *Globe and Mail* columnist Jennifer Lewington came up with the title *Overdue Assignment* for her book, she must have been thinking about the education finance issue. Many of us were. The 1990 election featured the big 60% promise, yet three ministers of Education have failed to address the issue. I'm not saying implement it; I'm saying address the issue.

The Fair Tax Commission took a stab at the question and failed miserably. No consensus could be reached. Now we all wait in anticipation for legislation that will outline the reform agenda in the spring of 1994. The government forgot that the Honourable Tony Silipo had promised to have a new finance system in place by September 1993.

The questions during this committee will tackle numerous policy areas within the Ministry of Education and Training, but the limited time allowance will not allow a thorough review of the essential policy field.

Mr Chairman, I have a number of questions and I think it would be in order for me to table them with the minister shortly.

I'd like to say in conclusion that I think we're at a pivotal point in the history of Ontario's education system. We need to define the roles and responsibilities of students—notice I'm saying "responsibilities" as well—even with students. One of the questions I received last week, actually in the minister's riding, from a student was the question of homework. He was annoyed because the school board had come up with a homework policy and he thought it was too stiff. I asked him if 20 minutes per credit was too much to expect; not that it all had to be done on an individual evening; it could be worked out with the teacher. When he thought about it, he said, "Well, maybe that's not a bad idea." But initially, he

really didn't think that the school board and parents should be demanding that he do homework. That's why I underline the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, school boards and the Ministry of Education. These roles and responsibilities have never been more crucial.

The need to make our workplace training programs responsive to the needs of the 21st century will determine whether we will be competitive in an increasingly interdependent world. There are hundreds of dedicated professionals delivering education programs in this province, and with their help we can have the best education and training system in the world. On that note, I think we're all on the same side.

1600

Mr Chairman, I have questions and I'll give you the areas because I don't think there's enough time. It's my problem perhaps, the time, but it's also the process's problem. There really ought to be an arena where we can ask these questions and have the minister discuss them in a thoughtful way with us, other than asking questions in the House, in other than time limits in this committee. I really believe that, because I think some of the controversial issues aren't always reported well because some of us don't always say well what we mean—that's only part of it, I know—and others don't read what they should read before they ask us questions. There just isn't time, I think, in this political environment that we work in—and it's our own fault, because we can make the time in our committees—for the kind of useful discussions that would be necessary.

**The Chair:** Mrs Cunningham, if it's useful, you have 10 minutes of your uninterrupted time remaining to discuss the process or to put on the record your questions. Then the committee by agreement and consensus has agreed to give you some time to ask further questions and the minister has the right to reply. If you wanted to put those on the record—

**Mrs Cunningham:** I'm actually finished now.

**The Chair:** —or table them with the committee, we can prevail upon the minister to consider written responses at a future point.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Okay, what I would like to do then is put on the record—I'm not going to read all the questions into the record; I'll put the topics on the record and give the minister a copy of the questions. There may be some that he would like to address at another time in an environment where we can have a useful discussion—in a public way, I mean.

My questions are going to be with regard to the Royal Commission on Learning, on the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, on the Ontario Parent Council, on violence in schools, on testing, on curricula, on de-streaming, on education finance reform, on the teachers' pension, on Jobs Ontario Training fund and on post-secondary education. We've put a lot of thought into them. What I'll do is actually give the minister a copy.

**The Chair:** As you're looking for those, Mrs Cunningham, it is the custom and practice of the committee, once compliance is given by the deputy or the

minister, that when on limited time during an estimate they will treat them in a similar fashion to an order paper question and circulate them through the clerk so that all members of the committee and the critics who attended would get copies of those responses. That's sort of been our practice, as long as the questions are within the mandate of the ministry. I should seek the compliance of the minister and the deputy, because that's been the custom, if they'll be willing to treat them in that fashion.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Sure.

**Mrs Cunningham:** What I thought, Mr Chairman, is that the minister might want to respond to some of the things I've just said because I saw him shaking his head and what not.

**The Chair:** Yes. I'm sorry, Mrs Cunningham, I'm going to say—

**Mrs Cunningham:** From my remaining time.

**The Chair:** No, Mrs Cunningham, there is a process we have to follow in this committee. The minister has saved his rebuttal time, waiting to hear your opening remarks; he has stacked some of that time. The committee has taken care of that part of it. I'm just trying to resolve the matters of specific questions that you're tabling that do not appear in Hansard. I will merely put on the record that the minister and the deputy will treat those as order paper questions since they've come through the clerk to the minister on your behalf. The responses will be circulated to all members of the committee.

If you wish to use the additional six and a half minutes you have in your time allocation to raise some specific questions, feel free to do so, but you still have six and a half minutes before I must recognize the minister, who will wish to respond to you. He has about 15 minutes allocated in accordance with the standing order to respond to you.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I'm not going to let him use any of my six minutes then. I'll use my six minutes.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I only get 15 minutes either way.

**Mrs Cunningham:** You didn't think I'd do that. But you've got 15. All right, why don't I just ask questions. Actually, there are some questions with regard to the future of provincial schools that I didn't table, so perhaps I can ask them now.

There are three provincial schools for the deaf and one for the blind in the province, and the future of the provincial schools is currently under review. In fact a new layer of bureaucracy has been added to the ministry, I think headed by Ruth Taber, under the auspices of the provincial and demonstrations schools team, to decide on the future of the provincial schools.

We had a letter which summarized the concerns of a parent of a student at the W. Ross Macdonald School for the blind in Brantford. These schools are providing, in our view, and obviously in the view of the parents, a fabulous service, both to the residential students and integrated students on a resource basis.

We've heard rumours that some of the schools, or one of the schools, may be closed, and I'm just asking you if



you can give us an answer: Are there any plans? What is the process? What's happening with the provincial schools?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** In terms of the way the ministry has been set up, the deputy can respond to that. I'd just like to make it clear that as part of the review of things that we're doing in the ministry and the bringing together of three ministries under one, we're looking at all aspects of the ministries' business to see how it can be done more efficiently.

Certainly the purpose of the review of the provincial schools is to take a look at the services that are provided and at how we can provide them more efficiently, whether the services are adequate and all of those very vital questions, but certainly with no intention of closing a provincial school. I know that rumour has gone around, but that's certainly not the intention. But I do think it's important that we review the role of the schools and the services they provide to see whether or not any cost-efficiencies or service improvements can be achieved.

In terms of how that's being carried out, I think it would be appropriate for the deputy to respond.

**Dr Charles Pascal:** Very, very briefly, I'm very sensitive to any perceptions that we're adding a new level of bureaucracy, especially the environment you called attention to earlier in terms of wanting to streamline and delay for a quicker response time in terms of policy and program development and work with our external partners.

What we've established is a provincial schools project. The word "project" is really important in this regard, because this is the gathering of some dedicated staff to engage in the review, which will be a very external-partnership-oriented process. I would be very pleased, with the minister's permission, to share with you and the critics in a very timely way the critical path in terms of timeliness and the manner in which that review will take place, because I think it will answer a lot of the questions. We have a very clear operating instruction from the minister that the assumption that the same number of schools will be there at the end of the process is certainly part of our marching orders.

**Mrs Cunningham:** That clarifies that. Have I got time to ask a question on the commission on learning?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs Cunningham:** This will give the minister an opportunity, because he heard what I said about the 18 months and maybe he wants to clarify that, because that's quite wrong. But really, I attended some of the hearings in different places, and five minutes to give a presentation, and sometimes in two different locations with the commission split, doesn't lend a lot of credibility to the whole process. I want the minister to respond to that. Is he happy about that? Does he wish it would happen in a different way? We went through the same thing on OTAB, and there's so little credibility, people will be absolutely amazed if anything comes out of it that's good. I think that's too bad. We raised it in the beginning, and the public raised it, and yet it still continued to happen.

There are two other things. In these times when everybody's watching everything and people are very much aware of what others are earning based on their experience and the job that they do, and we know the minimum wage is going to be raised on January 1 and there may or may not, from what we all hear, be fewer jobs, and especially if you're a student—we've got a young student on this royal commission without a lot of experience, but we do really appreciate her input and admire her, because she's doing an exemplary job. But don't you think that \$450 a day takes away from the credibility of the process there too? Everybody mentions it to me, whether we like it or not. That's silly. I don't think that young person expected that, and we've got to be more reasonable.

One more question and then continue on.

1610

**Hon Mr Cooke:** You'll have to remind me about the first one because I'll forget it by the time you get to the third one. I have a limited memory.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Actually, David, if you take a look, they're in order—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** It's okay; I can handle it.

**Mrs Cunningham:** —on the very first page of what I gave you. They're written down. What I dealt with was the timing, which isn't on there, the whole five-minute thing. Question number 4 was my second question and question number 3 is going to be my third one.

I really have to say, from watching this person in action, that I thought Mr Caplan was not appropriate in some of his questioning on one of the days that I was there because he argued with the presenters. That's not what we're supposed to be doing when we're listening—didn't argue; disagreed. That doesn't lend people to believe that in fact we're listening carefully.

I just have to say, after that I see him as a political commentator with a television program, Canada AM. When he came before our caucus he said one of the reasons he was chosen was because he was non-partisan. That's your problem, thank God, not mine.

How do I explain the non-partisanship of the commission, the fact that you as a minister are looking for non-partisan points of view, that you really care about being fair, when these kinds of things are happening? At the end, all of us know that we're spending some 600 whatever it is. What is the number? I hate to say it out loud it's so painful. What is that cost? You know the cost.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** The commission? About \$3 million.

**Mrs Cunningham:** How much?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I think it's about \$3 million.

**Mrs Cunningham:** You said it quietly too, I noticed. But the point of the matter is that it's expensive and we want it to be credible. Those are the questions I get. The floor is yours.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I'll start with the last question first. The \$3 million, actually, in terms of cost of commissions, this one is coming in at a fairly low rate. I don't know how you can have outreach, communication, some



research background, per diems for the members and so forth and all of the services.

Take a look at how much it costs for a committee of the Legislature to have public hearings when the House isn't in session. Each day is an incredible cost. It's just a fact that this is what it costs to have a commission.

We could have followed what royal commissions have cost in the past in this province and doubled it or tripled it. But we tried to pull together a budget that was reasonable but a budget that would still allow for proper accessibility for the commission.

In terms of any commission member, when there are complaints about anything that happens at the commission, I pass those complaints on to the commissioner and certainly have done so. I understand that on occasion when you've been at public hearings, and I certainly know I have occasionally lost my temper—that just simply happens.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Not you. You just get defensive. You don't lose your temper.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I don't get defensive. When those types of complaints come in I pass them on and I certainly have spoken with Mr Caplan and I agree that we have to be very careful.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Have you spoken to him about being on Canada AM and telling me that he's non-partisan all in the same breath?

**Mr Wiseman:** Aren't all three of them non-partisan?

**Mrs Cunningham:** The others aren't on the royal commission for \$450 a day, happily.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I'm not—

**The Chair:** Are you enjoying this? Because Hansard isn't getting half of it.

**Mrs Cunningham:** That's probably a good thing for me.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I hope it's her half.

**The Chair:** Try to go through the Chair and then you can read about this in generations to come.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I don't read any of this stuff. I want you to know that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs Cunningham. I believe the minister has the floor.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** The five minutes—I haven't, quite frankly, looked at all of the procedures that the commission has used. There are going to have to be, obviously, restrictions on the amount of time if everybody's going to be heard.

That is not the only way that they are receiving information. People are filing presentations with them and that material is being gone through; they're going into classrooms; they're meeting in discussion groups; they're using media as well in order to communicate with people.

I think it's not terribly fair that on one hand you've said the commission is going on for too long, that the end of 1994 is too long a period of time for the commission to go on. You want them to meet with everybody who wants to meet with them but you want them to not have any time restrictions or have longer periods of time with

each of the presentations. It's not physically possible. That's the reality.

I don't think the commission should just be travelling the province and receiving presentations. They have to get into classrooms. They have to meet with groups. They've been doing all of that as well. So there are certain realities, if this report's going to get in by December 1994, that have to be imposed.

The \$450 per day for the student is, I think, reasonable. The original idea, quite frankly, that we had thought of when a student was on was to take a look at setting up a scholarship. It was the view of the commissioners, including the student, that if there's full partnership, if each of the members of the commission is a full partner and a full member of the commission, regardless of age, then there should not be a difference in the way that we treat members of the commission just because one is a student. That is the reason the per diem is as it is.

I'm sure that Manisha will be using that money to further her education, but there was a very strong case made that we should not have a distinction or different levels of commissioners, and therefore different pay rates, just because one of them is a student. I think that was a good case and an appropriate decision.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Could I just add at this time that I believe that the commissioners will be meeting with individuals and groups throughout the systems—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** They are. They have.

**Mrs Cunningham:** —and that's a good thing. But the part that the public sees should be carefully thought through. The fact that sometimes in these committees we do, I think, a better job than others is to our credit. But when things don't work and a process is expensive, like some of our discussions here are—some of our committees, I think, are expensive because of the way we're being paid, and there are some things I have to say about that—I think that doesn't make it right.

But I will tell you, I've never sat on a committee of this Legislative Assembly that hasn't carefully thought about the witnesses who are representing groups having more time than individuals—I think I'm fair in saying that; even part of that—and carefully thought about the 200 persons who want to meet with us and we've had to pare it down to get maybe 25 or 30 meaningful presentations. Those are the kinds of decisions that we've had to take.

I think if somebody is getting \$450 a day for doing that they should have taken the time to do that carefully as well, whenever they've been asked in different cities to take a look of groups. I sat through individuals getting five minutes, as well as official groups representing parents, representing school boards—in London, you can imagine, there were some 11 different boards that made presentations in that region. They got the same five minutes as an individual. It was very difficult for them to have a discussion—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I'll tell you, one of the complaints that I've heard from some people is that the commission, when it spends time with school boards and other traditional groups that quite frankly have a lot of input in

terms of education policy in this province and individuals who don't—that the complaint would be quite different if the school boards were given more time with the commission, because they do have many opportunities. Teachers' federations have lots of opportunities.

But look, I'm not a member of the royal commission, and anybody who knows Gerry and Manisha and the rest of the gang knows that they are very, very independent, and they remind anybody who talks to them about it on a regular basis.

What I would suggest you do is, if you have some views about how the commission is operating, you should phone it, you should go meet with it, and it would be glad to listen to your views about how it can improve the way that it's talking to the public. But make that effort. They are an independent royal commission under the Public Inquiries Act.

1620

**Mrs Cunningham:** You won't be surprised to know that I have already done that, and in fact before the presentations in London, because as an elected member I could not get a list of the people who were making the presentation in London until the morning of the presentation.

I have another colleague saying the day before that it's very hard to tell your constituents where they fit in, who's appearing, and whether or not in fact they can appear when we don't get that kind of information. Maybe it was early in the game. All I'm doing here is not giving a political opinion; I'm giving you the concerns of the public, and I think you need to hear them.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** It's not a public hearing of a legislative committee. This is a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act. So some of that information should be coming to the presenters from the commission, not through politicians.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I think the commissioners have heard that, and I'm letting you know as the minister.

**The Chair:** The Chair has allowed this sort of debate to go on, but really the minister has about eight or nine minutes left to do—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Eight or nine? I haven't used any of my 15.

**The Chair:** The Chair has advised you that you have about eight or nine minutes left to provide some summary rebuttal remarks, but I'm anxious—I have a speakers' list with Mr Malkowski and Mr Beer, so I would like to, please—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I'll be very brief.

**The Chair:** —if I could, get back on track. Minister, please.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Very brief. The critic for the Conservative Party referred to the Common Curriculum document and the fact that it should be rewritten. I think she knows the process, and we ran through this a bit yesterday. We're consulting on the document to make some changes in it to reflect some of the concerns that have been expressed, and that revised document will be available at the end of 1994.

I'm not sure that you're accurate on the statistics when you indicate there have been more days lost because of strikes so far this year than any other year in the history of Ontario. I don't believe that's correct. We can get those statistics, but I don't believe that's correct. At this point, we've had Lambton, we've had the east Parry Sound elementary for a few weeks, secondary just in their second week, and Windsor elementary just their second week. That's significant enough, but I don't think it's the worst record in the history of the province at this point. That's not to underestimate the difficulties, and we had a bit of a discussion on that yesterday.

I'm pleased that you indicated that your party supports a tuition increase. It would be much more helpful and much more precise and much more in keeping with the philosophy that you were suggesting the Liberal Party should follow, that everybody should be clear, if you could tell me what kind of a percentage increase in tuitions you are willing to support.

**Mrs Cunningham:** We've already given it to you, and I gave it to you—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Just it slipped my mind. Maybe Hansard will—

**Mrs Cunningham:** —in a question in the House.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** What percentage was it?

**Mrs Cunningham:** It wasn't a simple percentage, so perhaps I could just table that with you again in this committee or give it to you in the House.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** You say it's on the record.

**Mrs Cunningham:** It is.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Okay.

**Mrs Cunningham:** It's all part of the debates.

**The Chair:** You two really want to debate, don't you?

**Mrs Cunningham:** No.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** No. I just am responding.

The LTABs and the status of the LTABs we went through yesterday and had a fairly good exchange on that yesterday, so we might want to take a look at Hansard in there.

The Jobs Ontario Training irregularities: I just think there's one thing you should keep in mind, and that is that there was a conscious decision that was made by the government, and I think an appropriate one, that we would be using community brokers, that this is not a program that could be delivered directly by government.

I think there are about, what, 150, 160 brokers and sub-brokers across the province. It would be very surprising to me if we went through this entire process and there weren't some difficulties with a few brokers. Out of the 160 there were about four. Those difficulties were picked up by our ministry when we were doing our audits and checks at the various brokers, which I think speaks to the accountability that's been built into the program by the ministry.

When you look at other public services in the province, when a children's aid society—I know over the years there have been a few of them that have had some



financial difficulties. When they have financial difficulties, people don't say, "Well, as a result of one CAS having difficulty, we're going to throw out the entire system," and that the entire system is a failure. I mean, that's just not a fair characterization of the success that this program has experienced.

I ask you to take a look at the statistics. There are over 32,000 jobs now. Over 20,000 people have been placed. We expect that we're going to achieve targets within the ministry and a lot of people are going to benefit from this program. It's politically motivated and politically appropriate to condemn the whole program because there have been a couple of problems, but I don't think it is a fair picture of how successful the Jobs Ontario Training program is.

The dropout rate: too high, I agree entirely, whatever that figure is. I think that's one of the problems we have in education, that we don't have good, solid statistics. Part of the CMEC agreement is to take a look at better statistical analysis and tracking of things like the dropout rate, and I think we need to do that.

**Mrs Cunningham:** That's a new number, by the way.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I know it's a new number but I still hear people—

**Mrs Cunningham:** That's the best one we could get.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** The federal Liberals were using 30%—well, all the federal parties were using 30%; some were using 40%. I mean—

**Mrs Cunningham:** The number federally is 17%. Never mind the parties; that's Statscan.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** What I'm saying, though, is that no one has a good, solid number, so people can say just about anything they want.

You've had community meetings and I think that's good. I just want to remind you that we're doing that on a regular basis. We had six across the province, have had quite a few since then and you're quite correct that you get, I think, a good grounding in what the public feels and what parents want to see by going in and listening to them.

We have deliberately not delayed all action as a result of the royal commission and made it very clear when we announced the royal commission that it would not be used as an excuse about change. When I go and talk to school boards and to some extent teachers' organizations as well, the accusation is not that we're using the royal commission as an excuse for inaction; the concern is that there might be too much happening in terms of change in the education system and that we should slow things down just to let people catch up.

I'm not going to argue about destreaming other than to say that we have a fundamental difference of opinion. If you get out into classrooms and talk to grade 9 students in the destreamed classes, I think you'll get a different perception. I certainly have by talking directly to students who feel quite comfortable and feel quite good about being in the same classes with kids they went to grade 8 with, that the transition has been made easier, and the teachers I've talked to, and how much excitement there is out there and how much change has taken place in

terms of the attitude of grade 9 teachers towards a destreamed grade 9. It's been really quite surprising.

I'd just point out to you that there was an awful lot of study that was done on destreaming. You sort of suggested that destreaming moved too quickly and should have gone to the royal commission. We had Radwanski; we had a select committee of the Legislature that looked at this. I guess the argument is that when you don't agree with a policy, then you want to refer it to a royal commission and have it study it. When you agree with a policy and it's not acted on, then governments are delaying.

I think enough study was done on this particular one and that the previous government actually was moving forward on it. I think we took the final steps.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I'm only saying, David, that there's no one universal program that's going to meet the needs of all kids and that all schools cannot be totally destreamed. That's all I'm saying. Where it's working I think is terrific and I approve of it.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Ed finance reform: I'm not sure whether you were saying it should or should not be sent to the royal commission. We deliberately said and publicly stated it wasn't going to the royal commission. Work has been done at the ministry and I'll certainly be taking some of my views to cabinet in the next several weeks.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I'm just saying 1992 is past.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** That's true.

**Mr Wiseman:** We still have 1993.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

**Mr Wiseman:** I don't know if that's significant.

**The Chair:** If I could get everybody back on track now, I'd like to recognize Mr Malkowski.

**Mr Gary Malkowski (York East):** I would like to follow up on a couple of issues related to the provincial and demonstration schools and one related to special education within the school boards of Ontario.

We know that the government has a commitment to accountability and we know that we're facing difficult times and some reforms are happening, trying to improve efficiency within programs and how we deliver service to students in Ontario. We know that the population of Ontario is changing, and that because of medical technology and as a result of different situations, medical technology has allowed the population to change; for example, pollution, the quality of air, the pollution of our water. These things have had an impact on the population.

**1630**

Now what's happening is that school boards are facing an increased number of disabled children. They have a different process for learning and they need to be provided with adequate resources so that they can do that.

My question is about the school boards. Does the ministry have a system to monitor the school boards so it can get statistics on the number of disabled children, including subdata on the various different disabilities, so that we know what resources are then available? Some



information seems to be overestimating or underestimating, but is there actually any system where there can be the actual tracking of the numbers, and then that information can be used for projections of costs within the ministry for school boards?

Then the second part is: Currently, for special education within school boards, the projected funding for 1994-95, is there any change, or what is the total cost for the programs? To go back to the provincial and demonstration schools for 1993-94, their budget, is there a change for 1994-95, and also, their total budget for provincial and demonstration schools for 1994-95?

**Dr Pascal:** I'll ask David McKee from the ministry to describe the database monitoring process.

**Mr David McKee:** The statistics that were inquired about come in annually in the September board reports that every school board in the province sends to the Ministry of Education. In addition to that, since the implementation of Bill 82, starting as early as 1980, school boards have been asked to review their special education provisions annually and to report to the Ministry of Education on any changes that they might make in those plans. So there are forms for that as well.

This year the reporting date was extended in view of deliberations that were under way regarding a possible policy on integration. But by the end of the calendar year, we will have those reports for this year also.

You also mentioned budget. I think probably someone else might be in a better position than I to speak as to budget for 1994-95, maybe one of the financial people.

**The Chair:** Do we have any takers from the number crunchers?

**Mr James Doris:** Jim Doris, project leader on education financing reform. On the funding of special education, it's on a per-pupil basis. In other words, it's not per student with exceptionalities, but for every student. Our recognition is \$285 for every elementary student in Ontario and \$211 for every secondary pupil in Ontario. That's for 1993.

**The Chair:** Can I ask a question for Mr Malkowski then? Can I ask when that change in accounting occurred, because as I understood, we were funding identified pupils; now we're funding an amount based on your total student population. What year did that change come in?

**Mr Doris:** It came in about four years ago.

**The Chair:** I think Mr Malkowski has a further question about tracking those dollars and how they're being spent on special education students.

**Mr Malkowski:** Just as a follow-up to that, you said there was a change four years ago about that. Are there changes every four years? Maybe I've misunderstood.

**Mr Doris:** We used to fund on specific numbers of students.

**The Chair:** As identified.

**Mr Doris:** As identified, exactly. So if a board said it had 40 students in one category, we funded for those 40 students. Now we have moved off that because it was very difficult to find the data and to get agreement on the data. It's now basically on a classroom situation on the

assumption that across the province every school board is going to have to deliver programs for all the students and therefore it's on a per-pupil basis.

**Mr McKee:** If I may just add to that, the specific designation was for trainable retarded students and there used to be a separate supplementary grant for trainable retarded pupils, and about four years ago that specific per-pupil amount was rolled into what we called the special education grant for every pupil, either elementary or secondary.

**Mr Malkowski:** How do we know what the system looks like for monitoring changes that happen within the population? Because of the change in enrolment, do we just use statistics, or what system is used?

**Mr McKee:** The annual review of school boards' special education plans would address the topic you are raising here, so that if the population of the school board goes up or down, in all likelihood, the number of exceptional pupils would vary as well and the school board would, by legislation, be required to indicate any amendments it has made to its provisions for special education in view of those changes.

**Mr Malkowski:** Therefore, you look at the annual enrolment of the special education students? Or you give a chunk of funding specifically for funding so that when you look at the funding that's given to the school boards, you depend on the enrolment numbers of students and that funding would change every year?

**Mr Doris:** I think we want to know what school boards are spending on special education purposes, which is what David McKee has talked about. But when we come to allocate this money to the school boards, it's rolled into a per-pupil allocation, not an allocation, in other words, only to exceptional pupils.

**Mr McKee:** This is an allocation for every student in the jurisdiction.

**The Chair:** Perhaps, I may, for Mr Malkowski's benefit, ask the question to you this way: Prior to the change in the treatment of special ed funding, as you've indicated, the tendency was to drive up the numbers of identified students requiring remediation and special ed attention. Following that change, have we noticed that the numbers of identified students, as set out in the programs based on the dollar allocation, have in fact declined? I think that's the point Mr Malkowski's trying to get a handle on in terms of, are we funding an identified student or are we simply identifying a general program based on the gross population of students in a school?

**Mr McKee:** First, let me clarify that about four years ago when the funding mechanism was changed, it was changed because it was only trainable retarded students who had a separate amount of money earmarked for that particular exceptionality. Certainly, I think one could find evidence in the province where the numbers had in fact, as is suggested, been driven up because of that additional amount of money there.

For exceptional students generally, I do not think we have seen that and there has, I believe, been some reduction in the number of students—we now call them students with developmental disabilities—because there's

no added benefit financially to give them that designation.

1640

**The Chair:** A final supplementary, Mr Malkowski, because I do want to move on.

**Mr Malkowski:** Yes, it is a final one. What is the total budget for the provincial and demonstration schools for 1993-94, and then, are there any changes for 1994-95?

**Mr McKee:** In approximate terms, it would be about \$61 million; slightly less, because that amount would have included the operation of the special education branch.

**Mr Charles Beer (York North):** I have a couple of things, if we have time today, that I want to follow up on, but given that Mr Malkowski touched on the area of special education, and that was one of them, I'll go with that one first. Just prior to that, could I say that we had some questions which I neglected to table yesterday, and I'll leave those with the—

**The Chair:** We'll get copies made and then give them to the minister. Please proceed.

**Mr Beer:** That's fine. Thank you.

Minister, I want to take you back to a letter that you wrote in August of this year to Mrs Fran Stronach, trustee of the Carleton Board of Education. She had written to you after the hearing you had, the public meeting in Ottawa. In that letter, she asked you two questions, one of which was about the cost of additional services assumed by school boards for children with special needs. You had a short answer, and I'd just like to quote it back. You say:

"In response to your second question, school boards are not expected to pay for social workers, speech pathologists and other therapeutic services. Some boards in the past have provided these additional services to ensure consistency of programming to special needs children, but these services remain under the jurisdiction of the ministries of Community and Social Services and of Health."

I have subsequently received from a number of boards concerns about just what that meant in the broader context of children's services. You may have seen a minute from the Halton board, which is one that had a rather extensive presentation by its officials around these kinds of services. I think as members, earlier this month, we had a letter from the president of the Ontario Association for Community Living which also expressed some concern, not specifically on necessarily those issues but on where the issue of greater integration was. So I'd like to just focus on those.

There was an interministerial committee which the Ministry of Education was involved in looking at children's services. My reason for raising this, Minister, and what I'd like you to respond to, is that I think it's certainly fair to say that one of the questions before us is, what ought schools to do? We need to look at that. None the less, the needs are there. I'm not saying that's what you're saying here, but if a school board decides it will not pay for a social worker, a speech pathologist, other

therapeutic services, those services are still required somewhere in the system because of the needs of the children. Where do you see us going in this one? What is actually happening that would bring about some kind of integrated approach to children's services?

I think when you read columns such as the one Michael Valpy had in the *Globe and Mail* several weeks ago, when you go back and look at the Sparrow Lake Alliance and the things it spoke about, when you go to Children First and Colin Maloney, a whole series of documents, people are saying, "Look, there is a real problem there." Perhaps we're expecting school boards to do too much, but if we're saying, "You don't need to do that," then how do we go about identifying who should be doing those things, what are the ones that are critical, what are the responsibilities? I think some might respond to your letter, in another response, by saying, "Look, over the years, school boards have built up an expertise in these areas, and that is the appropriate place, but the funding has to be changed." Could you just give us a sense of where things are with that?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Let me first of all say that I think probably the way the letter is worded could be interpreted in a way that I don't really think it is meant. I think what the letter is basically saying is that in terms of the responsibility that boards have under the Education Act, it really is up to them whether they're going to provide services, social work services and so forth. It's not mandatory under the act.

I certainly wouldn't want to encourage school boards to withdraw from providing these services because, in many ways, my experience has been that the services that are provided by school boards not only are top-notch but are in many ways probably more cost-efficient than some other services that students would be referred to, and so forth.

I wouldn't want this to be misinterpreted in any way. We're not encouraging school boards to withdraw from services that are provided.

I'd certainly agree that we need to find mechanisms to try to better coordinate services that are needed by children, social services that are needed by children in communities and the schools. It's not particularly easy when one knows that most of the community-based services are having difficulties in terms of waiting list and so forth, and when kids need assistance, especially when it's a crisis situation, they need that assistance right away.

My own view, and I don't think this is any different than yours, is that over the last 25 years or more so many agencies in a lot of communities have built up that there really are some opportunities that exist if we can ever break through the institutional barriers that exist to try to get agencies to rationalize in communities and to focus on putting more money into services and less money into some of the duplication of just administrative structures that exist in our services.

Unlike the health care system where health councils actually exist and where we were not that many years ago heading towards the establishment of children's services councils in some communities, there aren't really the



planning mechanisms that need to exist at the local level to make some of those recommendations and decisions to rationalize and to streamline.

My own view is that this is the direction we have to go. Some of the work that is being done in the Ministry of Community and Social Services I'm not entirely up to date with, but it just so happens, as you know, the deputy here used to be the deputy there and probably could be much more informative than I.

**Dr Pascal:** The questioner also used to be the minister there.

**Mr Beer:** I was going to say ministers never know anything.

**Dr Pascal:** This particular minister certainly did.

The question is a very important one and I would just add the following to what Minister Cooke has said. There are several places where the policy question is: Where do certain services begin and end? How do we redefine schools as community schools that are part of an interdependent system so that as individual entities they do fewer things better, they do it in a coordinated way, so that they not only provide direct services, educational and otherwise, but they act as brokers for each other?

As the minister has suggested, there are some communities where things are moving ahead in spite of the hardening of the categories at central headquarters where we still, quite frankly, have some problems. I was talking to the area manager in coincidentally a city called Windsor today in social services.

She described to me the integrated children's services activity that's being sponsored locally and with some help from Comsoc, and the work they're doing with the school system to ensure that as school boards begin to get out of certain types of things, they do it in a way, hopefully in a timely way, that identifies certain potential problems so that the social service agencies can come in as partners to try to ameliorate some of the problems that might be otherwise caused by unilateral action on the part of a school board. It's not perfect in that community, but they're beginning to take shape in terms of having the right kind of table constructed and the right people at that table.

1650

In summary, there are three places in answer to the first part of Mr Beer's question about not only the shape of the policy, which the minister and I have tried to talk to a little bit, but where the focal points are for that discussion. There is the ADM's committee for children and youth integration, which quite frankly has been in a bit of cryonic suspension for the last six or seven months due to an uncommon amount of reorganization taking place in the Ontario public service. That will be reactivated very shortly.

The Premier's Council on Health, Wellbeing and Social Justice has a children's and youth committee which is generating some very exciting policy and research work in terms of reinforcing the fact that healthy children yield healthy communities and what we need to do around this. As well, education finance reform is another place where the kind of—the penultimate para-

graph in the August 24 letter that the minister sent will be revisited in terms of what's core and what's not core.

Again finally, I would say the last person I heard elaborate on a vision of the school as an interdependent community organization, with the social service agencies and the justice system etc, was Monique Bégin reporting back to the Premier's Council a few weeks ago when she was giving initial impressions based on what people like Mrs Stronach and others are saying. So there's a lot of activity.

The good news is the activity, the policy work, may actually be interconnected. We may actually try to build some bridges between these four different places where some of this discussion's taking place.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Jim Wiseman):** I would just like to move on to Mr McGuinty; we do have others.

**Mr Beer:** I'm just going to finish, if I can, just very briefly.

**Dr Pascal:** I'm sorry about the length of the answer.

**Mr Beer:** No, no, I appreciate that and I'll be very brief.

I think that this is an area where we all have participated in sessions and looked at—and I think most of the people who are out there are agreeing that we need to do some things.

I think that when you look at what the needs are, there is going to be a real need for the government, sooner rather than later, to say, "Look, we've got to integrate the services." We're going to have to do some of the sorts of things that were done originally in long-term care when we put Comsoc and Health at least together in a functional way or what the district health councils are doing around some of these related issues. I think the message is, "Look, we've really got to get moving on that because there are a lot of needs out there and there are some problems." It doesn't mean creating a ministry of the child, but it means integrating so that there is the ability to cross-fund and do other programs in that way.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Ottawa South):** Mr Minister, I wanted to pursue this issue of ancillary fees, because I'm sure you recognize it's something that is very important to students.

The concern they have raised with me and which I had time only to raise in part with you in the House today relates to the legitimacy of some of the dramatic increases we've witnessed in ancillary fees in the province. In particular, we saw some at the University of Toronto, Western and I believe at Queen's. U of T had an increase of \$185 and Western of \$200.

I have a copy of something I was trying to make reference to in the House today, a document that was placed before the board of governors at Western on May 20 of this year, and it reads as follows:

"Through its expenditure control plan and social contract, the Ontario government has announced cuts of at least \$13 million, approximately 8%, from the university's current operating grant. The full impact of all announced measures are not yet known. In order to address part of these grant budget reductions, it is



proposed to institute a student services and support fee.”

So there the connection's made directly between a drop in funding from the province for its current operating grant and a commensurate increase in a new animal called a student services and support fee. This had not been in existence before at Western.

If I look at the ministry—I'm not sure if you'd call this a guideline; it's an excerpt from the Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual for universities. Under 5.1.2.4, it defines “an ancillary fee.” It says, “A non-tuition-related compulsory ancillary fee is a fee which is levied to cover the costs of items which are not normally paid for out of operating or capital revenue.”

But the records from the board of governors' meeting for Western clearly point to this additional \$200 cost, this brand-new animal called “a student service and support fee,” as being used “to address part of these grant-budget reductions.” Now, is that not increasing tuition fees through the back door?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** First of all, we've had a problem with or increases in ancillary fees for a period of time now, so this hasn't just popped up through expenditure control. Certainly, in the House you made the connection between social contract, and there's certainly no connection between social contract.

**Mr McGuinty:** It says it right here.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I don't care what their minutes say, but the fact of the matter is that the universities get a reduction in cost through the social contract legislation and a reduction in their grants from the government that comes to the same amount of money. So there isn't a driving up of the costs or a reduction in grants that is not met by a reduction in the cost at the university sector.

We certainly have taken a look. There was a report that was prepared for us on ancillary fees. Western, Queen's and Toronto have had some large increases in fees. I've told the students that as part of the package we're looking at for tuitions we're taking a look at ancillary fees as well and a policy that the government might want to have.

**Mr McGuinty:** If I could make a suggestion—

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Are you going to suggest that they abolish tuition fees? That was in the Agenda for People.

**The Acting Chair:** Not in the Agenda for People.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** It wasn't in the Agenda for People, Jim.

**Mr McGuinty:** The students are looking for an opportunity to have some voice in setting these kinds of fees. I think that's a very legitimate request.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** You see, that happens already. For example, back in my home community, the students took a vote and they have contributed through fee increases, through ancillary fees, \$10 million along with the CAW to build a new student centre—the first time that's ever happened in our country. So there are universities that use that kind of a model, and that's certainly one of the avenues, but there have to be some other considerations as well.

**Mr McGuinty:** That's of course not the kind of concern that the students have. I had the opportunity to visit that facility. It's outstanding, there's no doubt about it. But the concern that I'm raising and the concern that students have is that these are being imposed on them unilaterally.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I realize that.

**Mr McGuinty:** They've had no opportunity for input, and it would be nice if it was made part of policy so that in future when these kinds of increases are seen there's been some codetermination.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** We're taking a look at the issue of the report. It has been in for, I don't know, several months now, and I've certainly promised the students that this policy will be looked at in conjunction with the tuition policy, because we're taking a look at a broader package than just tuitions.

**Mr McGuinty:** When are we going to have an announcement on the tuition fees?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I haven't got an exact date in mind. Some time before the end of the calendar year.

**Mr Bradley:** You mean when the House isn't sitting?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Not necessarily either way. At some point when you're not there.

**Ms Christel Haack (St Catharines-Brock):** Before I get into my question, I wanted to actually advise the minister about something Ms Cunningham was making mention of with the task force going around looking at education. I did get a list of some of the names. We had, in advance of their arrival, as probably other members had, let people who were interested in the subject know that they were coming.

What I did get from some of the citizens who appeared before that committee was that they just showed up and they got on the agenda and were very able to make their presentation. So personally I feel that the citizens in St Catharines were heard and were accommodated to the best of the commission's ability.

1700

The issue I wanted to raise related to heritage language as well as the native language program. I've had some inquiries from the Niagara regional native centre with regard to getting some language instruction. I'm wondering what kind of uptake there has been overall, because I know of some interest locally and I'm not sure if someone here is in a position of answering today.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I don't know whether, because that's a fairly specific question—the only thing I will say is we have, with a fair amount of support, changed the name of the heritage language program to international languages. That's just been in the last few weeks. It seems like a minor issue, but it's a major issue and it more adequately reflects the importance that teaching additional languages plays in our education system and in our economic development, so that's something that we have just done in the last few weeks. I don't know whether, Maurice—

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** Mr Chair, I'm Maurice Poirier, the director of curriculum assessment.

**The Acting Chair:** Go ahead, please.

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** I have some statistics relative to the enrolment of children in international languages programs at the elementary school level. In the 1990-91 school year, 114,227 students were enrolled in these programs in Ontario; that is, 7,000 more than in the previous school year. Sixty-three languages were taught in 67 school boards through 5,400 classes and over 3,800 instructors. At the present time, 117,000 elementary students are studying some 60 languages through this program offered by approximately 70 school boards in Ontario.

**Ms Haeck:** You're reassuring me. I had heard also from someone else within the Ukrainian community that there was some concern about the change in the program, and obviously that's not the case, so I'm happy to hear that there's that kind of uptake in this particular area and I'll be able to let them know that there is good response, so thank you.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** I'll surprise the minister because I'm going to compliment him right off the bat here on the—

**Mr Beer:** Is that because you're from Essex?

**Mr Hayes:** And that's a surprise because—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** No, usually there is on the other side.

**Mr Hayes:** Yes. No really, on the Ontario Parent Council and I think that is certainly a compliment to the minister and the ministry on the initiative there and I think it's well overdue that parents did have some input into the education system.

The question that I really have though is dealing with destreaming. I know it has been a controversial issue. There have been some people opposed and some in favour and people like myself, even a while back I had really mixed feelings on destreaming. I know it may be a little bit early, but is the ministry getting any feedback from even the students and the teachers and parents on destreaming now or is it too early really to get an idea on how it is working?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I can certainly refer to the tour that we've been involved in, in northeastern, northwestern and eastern Ontario as well. The teachers that I've talked to and the students in the classrooms that I visited—as I've indicated earlier, it's been actually surprising to me that it's been as positive as it has been. Many of the teachers—and when I've been doing my tour I've gone into staff rooms and met with teachers—I've talked to have specifically gone out of their way to say that they're working through the problems and younger teachers in particular have been very, very enthusiastic about the kind of response and innovation and work that they've been able to do in the classroom.

I know we're going to be going through a more formal process, because it's a three-year, phase-in period. I'm sure there's been more feedback coming into the ministry and through the regional offices, and Maurice can probably give a better feel for it.

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** That's quite accurate. The regional offices are monitoring the implementation of this new program through the regional curriculum councils

and through the regional education councils. There's a continuous monitoring of progress on these initiatives. As well, we have provided some in-service funding to provide assistance to teachers in continuing to implement this initiative over the three-year period.

**Mr Hayes:** I know that was one of the concerns with the teachers. It was the timing, I guess, for them to get the proper training to implement it.

Back to the part about the parent council: In your opening remarks you mentioned there were 1,000 applicants.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Over.

**Mr Hayes:** I understand the response was higher than that, I had heard. People in my office were speaking to someone.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Yes, I can't remember the exact numbers. I know it's well over 1,000 people who made application, which has actually slowed up the process in terms of being able to announce the membership of the council, because the regional offices have gone through a process, and we have as well, to make sure that every application is reviewed and people have been interviewed. We should be in a position, though, shortly to announce the membership of the council.

**Mr Hayes:** The next question: Close to home, on the north shore of Essex county, I know, Minister, you're well aware of the situation there with spaces. There isn't a solution yet, but there is a concern about one board building a school or even trading properties or whatever the case may be. I was wondering if you could bring us up to date on what the ministry's plans are to try to resolve that problem down in Essex county with both boards, the public board and the separate board.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** At this point, all of the capital forecasts were due or are due any time now.

**Interjection:** They're in already.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** They're in now. There was a school board that we were meeting with last week that was asking for an extension, so I wasn't sure whether it was due this week or soon. In any case, they're now all in, so the regional offices will be evaluating each of the school boards' capital forecasts and then making recommendations to the Mowat Block, the office down here. Then we will be making some decisions and announcing capital allocations next year.

Certainly the school down our way—and I almost hesitate to even talk about Catholic and public schools in Essex county, but there is an overcrowding problem at St Anne's high school and we need to find a solution. But there's going to have to be a sensible solution found, one that I think builds on the needs of both the public system and the Catholic system. We're trying to arrange a meeting now of the two school boards.

**The Chair:** The deputy has requested a point of clarification, and then I'll recognize Mr Beer.

**Dr Pascal:** Just very briefly, when Mr McKee was answering Mr Malkowski's question about assessment and funding for exceptional students, special students, Mr McKee was accurately referring historically to the manner



in which the funding used to take place and, in a historical manner, referred to students as "trainable retarded."

I just want to make sure we reinforce that the present context sees us as having removed permanently, as a result of recent amendments, that phrase and having replaced it with "students with developmental disabilities." I just want to be sure that Hansard has real clarity on that, that Mr McKee was accurately using that historically but not meaning to intend current usage.

1710

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Beer:** I'd like to talk a bit about the testing program, leading off with grade 9. Briefly, though, by way of beginning, with the destreaming, which is something we have supported, my experience in talking to teachers to date has been reasonably positive. Obviously, it is early. I think the key in part is around the size of classes and the supports. I think that continues to be a major element of that working, but there are some positive signs there as we move to the end of November.

Now, with the testing, I'd like to just explore. We're into the grade 9 program and I wonder if you could provide us with a little bit more specific information. When we get those results, what happens then? How are, I guess to use the term, the stakeholders—the trustees, the teachers, others—to be involved in how we analyse the results of those initial tests, and what will be happening then in terms of other areas? What is the time frame?

Again, it's early days, but different schools, different people have been more positive than have others. I think one of the things that would be useful to get on the record is precisely what the steps are, so that we know what it is we're going to be seeing in terms of results and how these are going to be analysed and used. Maybe I could just start with that.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I'll give sort of a general response and then when we get into real specifics the ministry can respond. The general reporting, as I recall, is that individual results will be given to the student and the parent, and some of those individual results are dealt with at the local level. There will be province-wide marking of the test here, and those province-wide results and community results, or board results, won't be dealt with until next June. A lot of the students have had the test in the last few weeks, but because of the semestering and so forth more testing will be done in the next semester.

There is an attempt to have individual results, and that counts towards 10% to 15% of the student's mark, and then to get some province-wide results and board results that would be released by me next June.

**Mr Beer:** Can I just ask, getting a little more specific—

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Yes.

**Mr Beer:** —the individual results, will they be numerical? You have 60 or 70 out of 100. How are those being expressed?

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** The results are going to be reported according to a six-point scale. These results will be reported back to the schools, and therefore the teachers, the students and then their parents. The teachers

are expected to use the results of that marking to count towards that student's term mark.

**Mr Beer:** Sorry, can I just ask, the six-point scale with what, six being extremely good and one being not so good?

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** That's right.

**Dr Pascal:** If I can add to that, I think this is a very important discussion because what we're involved in is trying to make a distinction between the standards in learning outcomes and standardization.

A six-point scale will also have with it an explanation with respect to what a point on that scale means in terms of whether someone can or can't do something with respect to syntax and comprehension etc. We all want to get beyond numbers, which mean nothing to students, parents and educators.

**Mr Beer:** I appreciate that point, but we've all been talking about going around the province and public meetings and so on, and just even as a parent myself, if one has something that describes what that mark means, that's extremely useful. But for parents simply to have anecdotal information doesn't help. I notice British Columbia's now making changes. I think that's important and I appreciate the way it's going to be defined.

In terms of what's next, how do we see, over the next few years, this proceeding?

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** If I may describe the process from this point onward, we have received the materials from the schools for the first administration of the test and we are now proceeding with the marking. We will mark that work and we should have that finished before Christmas so that the work from the students will be returned to the schools in January, before the end of the first semester.

Work from those students who would take the test in February and April will be marked between April and June, because we have three cohorts of students, some in first and some in second semester, and there are also students who take a full-year program. So we have to allow for three administrations.

In each case, the results will be returned to the school for distribution to students and parents. The percentage of students at each performance level will be calculated for each school, each school board and for the province as a whole. School boards will be able to make their board results public as soon as they can. We will also publish reports for the provincial picture afterwards.

**Mr Beer:** If I can then, as a parent, one would have the result of one's own son or daughter. Then there would be available publicly the board results, and the school results within that. Is that correct?

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** That's correct.

**Mr Beer:** I just want to be clear.

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** We would be aggregating the data by school, by board and by the province.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** My recollection is that we'll be doing board results publicly, and province-wide results, but not individual school rankings.

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** We're not doing that.



**Mr Beer:** But the boards would have that information, would they?

**Dr Pascal:** The schools will have the information; the boards will have the information. The public presentation will be board by board, not school by school. So individual schools will be able to get some feedback for their own formative purposes.

**The Chair:** May I ask if trustees will be given access to that information, or just the boards, meaning the administration?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Certainly my assumption has been that when we're talking about boards, we're talking about boards, which includes the policymakers at the board.

**The Chair:** In other words, the trustees.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Continue. Who did I interrupt?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** You were asking about the future; you were talking future years?

**Mr Beer:** Yes. Having done this, then I guess the second thing just before that was, how do you propose to analyse how that went, how effective the process was, and the test, in terms of measuring what it was you wanted to have measured, and who's going to be involved in that?

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** We are selecting a subsample of the results of the first administration to ensure that the six-point scale is in fact measuring what it should be measuring. We are monitoring the administration of the test through the three times that it is administered. So we are having a formative evaluation process as we go through to ensure that the results are valid.

**Mr Beer:** Would that ultimately be made public?

**Mr Maurice Poirier:** Yes. In addition to reporting on the results, we're also going to be reporting on the process that we took to administer the test.

**Mr Beer:** Then, after this year, what?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Part of this is that any future testing is going to be informed by the commission. We haven't had extensive discussions in the ministry yet about what we're going to do, but it's certainly my expectation that at this point we're not going to just administer a test for one year and then drop it. We need to take a look at this testing opportunity in future years and, quite frankly, other opportunities as well.

**Mr Beer:** Just one final thing. On December 15, am I right, the national indicators, there's going to be the release by the council of ministers of—

**Dr Pascal:** The 16th, yes.

1720

**Mr Beer:** My understanding is that will be released by the council but that school boards are not going to see that prior to the release. There's been concern raised that they will not be aware of what is happening and are going to be hit by a whole series of questions that they would like to be able to be prepared for. I just wondered, how are those results being released?

**Dr Pascal:** We're in the process of asking the very same question to CMEC, because in an ideal world we

certainly would want our partners to have as timely an access to that as possible, whether that could be the day before, a couple of hours before, a couple of days before or something, the earlier the better, so that people are prepared with respect to the kinds of answers they wish to give in terms of interpretation. There's obviously some room for a differential response, depending on the data. So we're trying to find an answer to that question about whether we would be allowed to have that kind of opportunity for our partners in Ontario.

**Mr Malkowski:** I've heard a lot of concern raised by my constituents over the weekend. I went to a mayor's committee on multiculturalism and race relations, and parents are concerned about the increase in racism and violence that's happening in the schools.

I'm just wondering if the ministry has any plans to provide funding or to develop programs to try and reduce the racism and violence in schools, and if this could be done in partnership with the community and the parents as well as the students; for example, developing a student patrol system, a student judicial system, allowing the students to become accountable for themselves and to monitor other students. It would be done in cooperation with the schools and with the policing community. I'm wondering if the ministry has any plans in that area.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Certainly, in terms of anti-racism, we announced, as the member would be very much aware, the policies that flowed out of Bill 21. That was part of the major announcement that we made in July and the requirements under Bill 21 to develop policies at the local level. They must be approved by the ministry and so forth.

In terms of violence in our schools, I indicated yesterday, and I actually have in the House a few times as well, that we are working on a comprehensive policy within the ministry. It's not quite as easy as just developing one part of the policy over a couple of months, because we need to take a look at how we respond to violent incidents, how we respond to the students who may in fact be expelled from the school system, how we get into more preventive forms to prevent violence in the first place, and the whole concept of mediation and conflict resolution and so forth.

It's got to be a much more comprehensive strategy. There has been a lot of work done by some school boards. It's a little bit hit and miss and I think we need to do more work on it. It's been one of the focuses of the secretariat for the last several months.

The deputy has just pointed out to me that on November 5, as part of the development of this policy, we sent out a survey to school boards to try to get a better idea of the policies that currently exist. There hasn't been a lot of information even on basic data, the numbers of incidents and so forth, collected centrally or even by all school boards, so that work needs to be done before we can develop comprehensive policies.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Mr Malkowski has a supplementary.

**Mr Malkowski:** Yes, I do. Does the ministry plan to monitor the anti-racism policy and the initiatives within

the school board? Do we have some kind of system, a budget provided so that there can be a way to monitor what's going on within the school boards and develop the accountability of what's going on?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** As I indicated, the policies have to be approved by the Ministry of Education. That's the provision under Bill 21. So it's more than just monitoring. It's an actual approvals process. We've sent out material with guidelines and suggestions and so forth, but we want policies to be developed at the local level so that there can be a reflection of differences in need in various communities.

There was a small amount of money—I think it was \$1.5 million, if memory serves me correctly—that was provided for some development and that might even have been under the harassment and discrimination policy. The two policies aren't linked, but the money, the supports that we've provided to school boards are primarily with the development of material and backup and sharing information.

But it's certainly our view that anti-racist policy needs to be the way that we do business in our school boards. A lot of work has already been done by some school boards in the province and we need to learn from that.

**The Chair:** Mr Malkowski wants a fuller explanation. If not, I still have a speakers' list.

**Mr Malkowski:** I'm satisfied. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Mr McGuinty.

**Mr McGuinty:** I wanted to ask a little bit about university accountability, if the task force has got its recommendations in, and you made reference in your opening remarks to an action plan being put into place. I just wonder if you could tell us in what ways you feel universities ought to be more accountable.

Are we talking about value-for-money audits? Are we talking about the kinds of programs they offer, teaching load, contact hours, tenure, sabbaticals, those kinds of things?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Part of the accountability mechanism I think is not entirely unrelated to some of the suggestions we've made on makeup of boards of governors. I'm trying to think of the consultation period the report was sent out. All of the feedback was supposed to be back into the ministry last week. So the report itself I think sets out some mechanisms as well as a stronger role for the boards of governors of universities.

I don't have a whole series of specific initiatives that we're announcing at this particular point. Part of it is a change of attitude, I think, in terms of how boards view themselves, a role that they need to play, how they need to hold the administration accountable and that the community itself needs to see itself as an enforcer of accountability. I think that's kind of the theme of the report.

**Mr McGuinty:** Are you prepared to consider something like value-for-money audits?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** Are you talking at the school board level or at the university level?

**Mr McGuinty:** Universities.

**Dr Pascal:** If I could just add to what the minister has said about the nature of the report, the reason the minister and the ministry are pleased, as the minister said in his opening remarks, about this as a starting point is because for the first time in I think any Canadian jurisdiction, we have the university community talking about performance indicators, actually coming together and saying that the university system should develop output measures of success along with input and process measures—how are we going to define quality?—and to make those transparent and to have an arm's-length auditing body to determine whether or not institutions are performing. So we get beyond the kind of coffee table discussions around what quality is and what quality isn't, whether one has on the coffee table Maclean's magazine or some other distinguished journal.

**1730**

If I can use the example of sabbaticals, which you used in your example, it is perfectly appropriate for the public to expect that if somebody takes a sabbatical at public expense, there's a reporting back to her or his peers about how it went: Did you do what you said you would do in terms of your research and scholarship and, if not, why not?

The issue of value for money, because I want to use that as a way of dealing with the value for money: Whether the minister or the Provincial Auditor gets a yes on the nature of how the audit should take place around value for money or the complementary process, which is recommended in the Task Force on University Accountability, rests with how value for money would be done. I don't think any government would want to tell universities whether what the professor did on her sabbatical was a socially useful thing to do. That would be a major departure from anyone's definition of academic freedom since the university system was concocted in Bologna 820 years ago.

But the issue of "Did they do well with what they decided to research?" is something that requires, as an example, a much tougher, much more transparent accountability mechanism within the university system and that's the nature of the debate. How the government and the auditor and the public accounts committee finally decide on the nature of those processes has yet to play out.

**Mr McGuinty:** Just one final thing related to that accountability: Tenure, and I guess some of the controversy that's connected with that, rears its head from time to time, and more so I think of late than in years past. It's often now connected with the discussion about a university's ability to respond to changing public demands in terms of different kinds of programs becoming more popular and having professors tenured in one area and being unable to shift resources to another area. Is that something you plan to take a look at?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I don't think we were specifically going to be looking at tenure. I'm not sure that this is as much a question of university accountability as it is a question of the need for the post-secondary system to take a look at restructuring and the system looking at restructuring.



But I think governments find it difficult because universities are very independent organizations. They have a tradition of being independent and it has served the province well over the years, so we have to try to encourage universities to look at themselves as much as possible as a system and to restructure.

We are looking at how that could happen and what role OCUA should play, and I hope that we'll have something to say about that very soon, but I think that is more of a focus on restructuring and the impediments that exist in the system towards restructuring.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr McGuinty. I have Mr Beer and Mr Malkowski still on the list.

**Mr Beer:** Minister, I know we have a short bit of time, but I wonder if we could just look at the Tom Wells report, Windsor-Essex, and Brian Bourns in Ottawa-Carleton.

I think one of the things that was interesting, if I understood both their reports and their comments to the media, was that in going through the hearings and in looking at the whole question, the issue of amalgamation is probably more complex than we may all have thought at the outset, but that there are some options: this whole question around the consortia, I guess is the correct term, that has come forward.

But I'm just wondering, in terms of the government's reaction to both of these reports, is it your belief now that the way we should be moving is in trying to bring boards together around a whole series of things, be it transportation, purchase of goods and services, many of the non-educational services, which could even be done in concert with community colleges, with universities, with other public institutions, thereby leaving the boards, in a sense, to do more of what they are there to do, which is the education of those in the system?

Are there some general applications that you believe you can take now from those two reports as you look at streamlining the administrative structures of school boards in the province?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I think that, as certainly learned from both of the reports, some of the difficulty is towards amalgamation of boards, and it's a fact that amalgamation may not make sense in Ottawa-Carleton or Windsor-Essex. That doesn't mean it doesn't make sense in other areas of the province.

I'll be the first to admit that I had the view that we could go into a few areas of the province and that the idea of amalgamation just simply made sense and that the same principles could be applied in more than one area of the province. That's not possible. Certainly even the funding models that we currently have are major barriers to looking at amalgamation of boards, pay rates and everything else. That's simply the reality.

I think there are opportunities to find savings through sharing of services. Some boards have done that. I think there's a heck of a lot more that they can do. I do have a bit of concern that it may not happen quickly enough or that it may happen during difficult times like we're all experiencing now, and then you'd begin to wander away from it when the economy improves. I've seen that with

some boards in the province already.

The accountability is a question too. I mean, if you start having a lot of joint services, what board is ultimately accountable to the taxpayers, or is anybody accountable? You can even see that over on the municipal side, where all of these joint services and agreements between different municipalities have existed and there's no accountability to the taxpayer at all.

In the meantime, I think it's the only option we have available to try to move forward with amalgamation in Windsor-Essex. We haven't made any formal response to Brian Bourns yet and hope to do that in the next few weeks, but certainly in Windsor-Essex to move forward with amalgamation would have cost a considerable amount of money because of the difference in service and wages.

There are other examples. I still believe that the London and Middlesex public boards have made a major mistake by not moving forward with amalgamation and that it will only be a matter of time before that will have to happen. But it didn't seem to make sense to have a major war at this particular point.

**Mr Beer:** Just briefly, because I know there's another questioner, do you expect to be responding to the Brian Bourns report before the end of the calendar year, or is it more likely January?

**Hon Mr Cooke:** I hope we can do it before the end of the calendar year, and I chatted with you briefly about this. The one recommendation with regard to the French-language school boards, I think, makes a lot of sense, even though one of the newspapers responded by saying that the Bourns report recommended the creation of a new board.

The reality is that it's really recommending the reduction of one board, and it makes a lot of sense to do that, I think. There might be an opportunity, if we decide to go forward, to try to do that in legislation before next year, when we get into another municipal election year. I want to respond to it as quickly as possible. We just haven't had a chance to do it yet.

**Mr Malkowski:** Very briefly, the percentage from the federal government in terms of transfer payments for 1993-94—and we know that we just recently heard of a deficit of \$40 billion. I'm wondering what you're thinking you can expect from the federal government in transfer payments for 1994-95.

**Hon Mr Cooke:** That's really something I haven't—well, we worry about it in our ministry, but we let Floyd worry on our behalf. So I don't know at this point, but the Treasurer can worry about that; we'll worry about strikes and other things like that. I don't know at this point.

**Mr Hayes:** I'm just wondering, I think we've had a pretty thorough discussion here and I know we have a vote in the House coming up. I'm wondering if we could kind of speed up and get through with the votes on the estimates. I'm sure the members would agree with that.

**The Chair:** That's a request to call the vote at this time, if there's no objection. None at all? Fine. Given that we must report to the House tomorrow, the time, by



mutual agreement, is concluded with respect to the estimates in the Ministry of Education and Training. I have a series of votes I must go through, with your indulgence.

Shall vote 1201 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1202 carry? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall vote 1203 carry? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall vote 1204 carry? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall vote 1205 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1206 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1207 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the estimates of the Ministry of Education and Training be approved? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall the 1993-94 estimates of the Ministry of Education and Training be reported to the House? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

This meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1742.









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Beer, Charles (York North/-Nord L) for Mr Elston

Cunningham, Dianne (London North/-Nord PC) for Mr Arnott

Malkowski, Gary (York East/-Est ND) for Mr Abel

Martin, Tony (Sault Ste Marie ND) for Mr Lessard

McGuinty, Dalton (Ottawa South/-Sud L) for Mr Mahoney

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

James J. Bradley (St Catharines)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia



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ISSN 1181-6465

# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 10 May 1994

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 10 mai 1994

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 10 May 1994

Mardi 10 mai 1994

The committee met at 1528 in committee room 1.  
ORGANIZATION

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** I call to order the standing committee on estimates and welcome the committee members to our mandate to examine the estimates for the 1994-95 fiscal year of the government of Ontario. Our clerk has prepared a brief organizational agenda, but our first order of business is the need to find a new nominee for the government side to the subcommittee, since the House leaders have informed the House of a change off the committee.

**Mr Noel Duignan (Halton North):** I move Wayne Lessard as our member of the subcommittee.

**The Chair:** Any other nominees? Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed, if any? That's carried unanimously.

The other items you may wish to add to your agenda are a brief report from Ray McLellan, our researcher, attached and more devoted to our committee, and also a letter which I have sent to the chairs of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and the standing committee on public accounts around certain commonalities between our three committees with respect to financial matters of the House.

The third item I hope we are able to dispense with today is the selections for the estimates for consideration. I'm led to believe by the subcommittee representatives of each of the caucuses that they were able to come prepared to make those selections today. That will be very helpful to the government both in preparing its estimates books for each ministry but also those that are chosen first.

Is there general agreement that we proceed with those three items? Are there any additional items that any member wishes to raise in this meeting? No.

Can we proceed with the selection process first? Are you comfortable with that? Then, in accordance with the standing orders, each caucus, in rotation, can call up to two ministries, with a total of 15 hours to be divided as per their suggestion. We will proceed first with the official opposition, then with the third party and then the governing party, in accordance with the standing rules. Is that understood?

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** Usually we were dividing up 15 hours per choice. Did you mention that, 15 hours? You said the number of hours at their request. I just wanted to clarify that.

**The Chair:** I think I suggested 15 hours and how that's divided, but if you present two ministries, you may

wish to do 10 and five hours or whatever. I'm simply saying that within that 15-hour maximum, the Chair would seek the guidance of the proposer of the selected ministries to assist us by giving us the amount of time. Is that agreeable? Agreed.

I will begin with the Liberal caucus.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** Our first choice would be Solicitor General and Corrections.

**The Chair:** And your second choice?

**Mr Ramsay:** Our second choice would be Health.

**The Chair:** How would you propose to divide your time, or do you want to think about that for a moment?

**Mr Ramsay:** Yes, I'll think about it, thanks.

**The Chair:** Very good.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** The Conservative caucus would choose as a first pick the Ministry of Transportation and as a second pick the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The suggestion of our caucus is that six hours be allocated to the Ministry of Transportation and nine hours to the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Lessard:** The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines for seven and a half hours and Management Board for seven and a half.

**The Chair:** No comment.

**Mr Ramsay:** I'd like to recognize you for the second round. Do you have your selections?

**Mr Ramsay:** Yes. We would like to select Agriculture and Food, and Housing.

**Mr Arnott:** Second-round choices for the Conservative caucus would be the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy, splitting the time.

**Mr Lessard:** They're combined ministries; it's the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

**Mr Derek Fletcher (Guelph):** It's one ministry now.

**Mr Lessard:** The estimates are going to be combined. If you want to do it for 15 hours—

**Mr Arnott:** That's true, yes.

**The Chair:** Do you want to think about another selection?

**Mr Arnott:** Yes, I do, Mr Chairman. Culture, Tourism and Recreation would be our second choice.

**The Chair:** Thank you. How much time?

**Mr Arnott:** Splitting the time between the two, seven and a half hours.

**The Chair:** And Mr Lessard?

**Mr Lessard:** The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the Ministry of Natural Resources, seven and a half hours each.

**The Chair:** Could I return to Mr Ramsay? Can you give us a sense of your allocation on the Solicitor General and Corrections and Health?

**Mr Ramsay:** Six for the Solicitor General, nine for Health; six for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, nine for Housing.

**The Chair:** I will read the motion before the committee.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** That's the Solicitor General and Corrections together?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr Wiseman:** Same minister, but different—

**The Chair:** Well, are they separate ministries? What's the ruling?

**Mr Wiseman:** I think they're separate ministries. Could we check that?

**The Chair:** Are they separate estimates? It's a combined ministry, I'm advised, so they'll be treated as one. That's fine.

If I may, I'll read the motion moved by Mr Ramsay, seconded by Mr Arnott:

"That the following estimates in order be presented to the House for approval for the 1994-95 estimates consideration:

"Solicitor General and Correctional Services ministry, six hours; the Ministry of Health, nine hours; the Ministry of Transportation, six hours; the Ministry of Community and Social Services, nine hours; the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, seven and a half hours; Management Board, seven and a half hours; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, six hours; the Ministry of Housing, nine hours; the Ministry of Environment and Energy, seven and a half hours; the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, seven and a half hours; the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, seven and a half hours; and the Ministry of Natural Resources, seven and a half hours."

All those in favour? Opposed, if any? That's carried.

We have two other items that we could perhaps deal with today by way of introduction, and then not necessarily call upon us to have a meeting next week unless the committee sees fit to do so.

Just by way of information, I should let you know that the Treasurer has five sessional days to table the estimates, and we have 10 days after that period of time in which to begin our estimates. Technically the first day on which we can begin our estimates is May 30, in case you want to make a note of that.

Since the committee meets on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, May 31 and June 1 will be the beginning of the estimates of the Solicitor General and Corrections ministry. Once this has passed in the House and we've reported to the House on Thursday, then we will notify the ministries so that they know when their ministry will

come up. With your permission, we'll schedule our estimates to begin on May 31.

Perhaps I could introduce and welcome Ray McLellan, who's a researcher attached to our committee, who has developed a report on estimates review procedures and expenditure accountability. I apologize if this hasn't gotten into your hands a little earlier, but we had a subcommittee meeting last week to inform the caucuses that we were obtaining this information for purposes of discussion within the committee. I'd like to hand it over to Ray unless there's an initial question. He has a brief couple of words about the report.

1540

**Mr Ray McLellan:** I would just deal with the report that's entitled Overview of Estimates Reporting in Ontario. What I was asked to do in this report is update an earlier report that had been prepared by legislative research, and this would be going back a year ago now, actually to 1991.

A report had been prepared looking at the estimates process and concerns that had been voiced between 1979 and 1989, until the committee was established. The Provincial Auditor and a number of provincial committees during that 10-year period had looked at the estimates process. The overwhelming recommendation was that an estimates committee be established, and of course that has been done.

This document is really more for information purposes and hopefully it'll help us, as we look at the estimates process, understand exactly how it works from the mechanical background; in other words, how the expenditure estimates come to be, the role of the Supply Act etc.

The "Estimates Planning and Reporting Requirements" describe the annual planning procedures that are followed by the government, the role of treasury board with respect to instructing ministries to prepare the estimates, and, going on to page 3 of the report, I look at the role of the policy and priorities board, the treasury board's role, the Management Board's role, how the government repackages estimates from year to year.

Something that I was particularly interested in is the treasury board review process, at the bottom of page 3 and the top of page 4, and the instructions that the ministries receive through this yellow document which has been around for a couple of years. It's entitled General Guidelines for the 1994-95 Estimates in this case, so this is the most current document that the ministries are expected to comply with.

**The Chair:** If I may, has everybody got this package? You have that? Good.

**Mr McLellan:** Over the years the committee has discussed this document and looked at it and made recommendations for changing and improving it. Generally the comments have dealt with general issues, not specifically the contents. They've dealt with the production costs of the estimates, the visual presentation of the documentation in this general guideline, and also the time frame for submitting the estimates and briefing books.

Of interest in this particular document is the reference on page 9 to the sections "Major Capital Projects" and



"Financial Analysis of Activity and Subactivity." These are the two critical changes.

At the top of the page, under "Major Capital Projects," we deal with the crown corporations, the Ontario Financing Authority and the treatment of loans. The clerk can hand out a page on background with respect to the Ontario Financing Authority and that'll help us understand how the process works, but I'll just read this so we're clear that this is new information and will change the procedure somewhat as we look at the estimates this year. It says as follows:

"Non-budgetary capital will no longer appear in the printed estimates. Since these funds will be advanced as loans from the Ontario Financing Authority, it is not appropriate to show it as part of your estimates. However, a note should explain moving capital expenditure to the crown corporations as loan-based financing."

The handout going around right now explains exactly how the Ontario Financing Authority operates. I go on to read here at the top of the page:

"Please note that for those ministries where non-budgetary, loan-based capital financing has been approved in place of capital expenditures, the comparable prior year's estimates in interim actuals amounts for the 1992-93 actual should not be restated as non-budgetary." That's the first change.

Secondly, going down to the section, "Financial Analysis of Activity/Subactivity," the second paragraph reads, "Ministries delivering Jobs Ontario programs should clearly separate and label these entities. These programs are Jobs Ontario Capital, Jobs Ontario Training (including Jobs Ontario Training Child Care), Jobs Ontario Summer Employment (formerly youth), Jobs Ontario Homes and Jobs Ontario Community Action." Those are the only changes we're dealing with with respect to the general guidelines for the estimates we're going to consider this year.

The rest of this background report goes on, as I say, to discuss the statutory framework with respect to the Supply Act, the specific legislation that we're dealing with here, and the relevant statutes are listed on page 5. I won't bore you by going through the details of those. The Treasury Board Act, the Executive Council Act, the administration act, these deal with the estimates process and where the figures come from.

**The Chair:** Ray, can I just interrupt? I'm not sure I have the document you're referencing.

**Mr McLellan:** This is the one entitled Overview of Estimates Reporting in Ontario.

**The Chair:** Okay. That's not the one we've circulated. You don't have an extra copy?

**Mr McLellan:** I only have that one copy.

**The Chair:** Okay. I apologize to the committee because we've been referencing a document that isn't before you. We will recirculate that document, and with that understanding, Ray, continue.

**Mr McLellan:** This document was prepared, going back a couple of weeks ago and submitted, but I'm not sure exactly what did happen with it.

**The Chair:** It wasn't circulated to the committee, I don't believe, but we'll correct that.

**Mr McLellan:** This document runs through the statutory framework. We look at the general guidelines for this year. Basically, there isn't much more in that document other than just setting the framework. I discussed this issue with the Chair, and he had said to me that we should follow up on the 1991 document and give the committee some kind of context as to where the estimates come from and the fact that ministries are expected to comply with this particular document, and that if there are any changes from last year, we should note and highlight those, and I've done that.

As I say, I think these are the two critical areas with respect to the crown corporations and those are areas we should have a look at when we look at the estimates this year. This document deals with that background material and little more than that, but at least it provides us with a framework for the estimates review.

Are there any questions on that? It's unfortunate that you haven't had it to look at.

**Mr Duignan:** Maybe when we get a look at it, we'll get back to you.

**Mr McLellan:** Okay. That deals with the general guidelines issue. There are a couple of other points, and I'll raise them quickly.

Another point the Chair had asked me to look at—and hopefully you'll have this memo, dealing with the estimates in selected jurisdictions across the country.

**The Chair:** No, they don't have that. What they've been circulated is this one here, Estimates Review Procedures and Expenditure Accountability, and this memorandum.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No, that has not been circulated as yet.

**Mr McLellan:** We're not having a great deal of success on this. The last one of the three is the one before you, entitled Estimates Review Procedures and Expenditure Accountability. In this document, what I've attempted to do is to provide a bit more background with respect to the Supply Act.

As I've said here: "Spending authority, other than for payments authorized by a specific statute, is granted by the Legislature to the government by the process of 'supply' as governed by the House standing orders and parliamentary tradition. Passage of the Supply Act constitutes the statutory authorization by the Legislature of the government's spending program for the fiscal year."

On the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2 I've outlined exactly the way in which this occurs or happens. This process applies only to the voted appropriations, which comprise about 90% of the estimates. The remaining 10% are dealt with through statutory appropriations; for example, as I referred to earlier in the other report, the Executive Council Act, the Financial Administration Act. So the majority of the estimates are dealt with through the voted appropriations, as I think most of us are aware.

Prior to the actual passage of the Supply Act, usually in the autumn of the year, government spending proceeds on the basis of the motion for interim supply.

In addition to the Supply Act, the other sources for alternative funding mechanisms and sources are through special warrants. Generally, special warrants have been used very infrequently; I think over the last number of years just a couple of times. Often they'll deal with, as I've noted here, natural disasters.

**1550**

On the top of page 3: We also have what we call treasury board orders. They're not voted in the House but are reported in the Ontario Gazette.

Thirdly, statutory appropriations: Funding is created by a specific statute, and we've referred to some of the statutes. Again, however, these increases require treasury board approval.

**Mr Fletcher:** The special warrants come from Finance?

**Mr McLellan:** It's under the auspices of the Treasury Board Act. I spoke with Finance about it the other day. As I say, they deal with natural disasters, for example, or the farming community and issues such as that.

**Mr Fletcher:** The Hagersville fire would fall under that?

**Mr McLellan:** I'm not sure about that, but as I say, they're used infrequently.

Just to provide some context as well, as we look at the accountability process, and that's part of our job here, Management Board has two volumes called the Directives and the Guidelines, and in those documents Management Board provides very clear directives to managers within ministries as to how they are to conduct their business with respect to estimates.

I went back and had a look at the Guidelines and the Directives and I say here, "Management Board of Cabinet's directive on expenditure management provides an accountability framework for public funds. The purpose of the directives is as follows," and I listed the four main points with respect to the allocation and control of funds and expenditures monitored and controlled within specific authorized guidelines. So there is, as I say, a very definite framework that managers are expected to comply with.

"The directive provides mandatory requirements with respect to maintaining expenditure levels as provided by Management Board and the Legislature," and the necessary approvals to spend above the authorized limits have to be addressed, obviously, by Management Board. "Management Board approval is required for the annual estimates, expenditure increases/decreases, Management Board orders"—in this case treasury board orders—"supplementary estimates etc."

The movement of funds back and forth within ministries is very closely guarded and reported. In the expenditure manager's guide from Management Board, they go into a great deal of detail as to how these are monitored. For example, there are ministry reports specifically on the results. There are the ministry annual reports that deal with issues such as this. There are the public accounts

and obviously the Provincial Auditor's report to the public accounts committee. So there is a very rigid mechanism to monitor and account for these funds.

Then on page 3, I note some comments on the estimates review process. I referred earlier to the various legislative committees that have looked at the issue of accountability for the estimates process. I make reference to those committees and also to concerns of the Provincial Auditor in his 1987 and 1988 reports. I think this ties in to an issue that has been raised by the Chair. Maybe I can refer to the letter that I think has been tabled. That letter builds on some comments made by the Provincial Auditor back in the 1987 and 1988 annual reports.

At that time, issues were raised with respect to the estimates reporting process. Specifically, members at the time had raised concerns about the fact that spending takes place before the actual vote on the Supply Act occurs. In addition to that, members had raised concerns with respect to the cursory review of the estimates. So back five and six years ago, a number of concerns had been raised with respect to the estimates.

At the time, the Provincial Auditor made the following recommendation to revise and strengthen the accountability loop for the estimates process, and I think this ties into this letter from the Chair of April 7.

The Provincial Auditor at the time made the following recommendation to revise and strengthen the accountability process in the estimates review:

The estimates committee should "coordinate its work with that of the standing committee on public accounts and the Office of the Provincial Auditor. For example, in a given fiscal year, the proposed expenditures of certain ministries would be reviewed and approved by the newly formed committee." That is this committee. "Later, the actual expenditures of the same ministries would be audited by the Provincial Auditor and commented on in the auditor's annual report to the Legislature. These comments would be subsequently examined by the standing committee on public accounts."

I've spent a number of years at the public accounts committee and we have not specifically addressed these issues. That committee is primarily concerned with reviewing the specific audits that come out of the auditor's annual report at the end of each year.

**Mr Fletcher:** Is this saying that these committees should form a new committee? Is that what I'm hearing?

**Mr McLellan:** At the time, I was trying to tie my comments into some of the points that have been raised by the Chair of the estimates committee, and I wanted to give some background on the thinking five and six years ago as to what they thought should be done to close the accountability loop.

If this committee is going to be tied with other committees, for example, the public accounts committee or the finance and economic affairs committee, I just wanted to give you some precedent of some of the earlier thinking on this issue.

**Mr Arnett:** Mr Chairman, have you received a response from either of the individuals?

**The Chair:** Not as yet.



**Mr Arnott:** They would have to discuss it with the committees involved.

**The Chair:** I can say that they are aware of the issues I raised in my letter, because I was present as a member of the public accounts committee when it was discussed with the auditor in the room. I was a member of the economic affairs committee when it was briefly mentioned. So the other two committees are talking about it.

I simply took the initiative to write them. Ray has put in context in his report the genesis of it. We're not proposing an additional committee. We're simply saying that the three committees may not wish to continue to act in isolation of each other, given that the Provincial Auditor and maybe critics outside of this building, the public at large, may want to start asking some questions about how our accountability loop works.

I thought that it best be advised that the committee at least examine some of this information and not have it brought to our attention through the route of an auditor's report or another committee telling us whether they think we're doing a good job or not, but that we should reflect upon that as a committee.

**Mr Fletcher:** If we're looking at the committees coordinating and trying to get rid of the duplication, I read your letter and I think that's a good idea. I can understand that. But if we're thinking of setting up another committee to oversee, I don't think I can go along with that.

**The Chair:** No, it's not even being remotely suggested or implied.

**Mr Fletcher:** But we'll discuss that at a later date.

**The Chair:** I think it's fair that we, as a committee, for example, should reflect on the fact that there's no linkage with the other two committees, and yet in the eyes of the public we're responsible for examining expenditures. Surely there's support for us to link periodically so that we can dialogue. To have the three committees come together to discuss matters of mutual concern I don't think would be out of order.

**Mr Fletcher:** No, I have absolutely no problem with dialogue and working together. That's a good idea. That should be happening at all levels.

**The Chair:** Secondly, Mr Fletcher, there are periods of time when the committees are more active than others, but I think it's fair for me to say that we have a very proactive auditor in this province now—not in any way to diminish what many felt was a superb effort by Douglas Archer. He, with his experience from across Canada, is expressing some concerns about strengthening the accountability loop, as Ray has referenced it.

I was nervous that so many other people were talking about our committee but that we weren't. I just wanted to stimulate the dialogue so that if we're asked, we could say: "Oh yes, we're looking at that. Thank you very much."

**Mr Fletcher:** I think it's a very good idea every now and then to take a look at your committee. I think it should be up for discussion.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** I would agree.

**The Chair:** You mentioned accountability and Pat says, "Yes, we're looking at it, no problem."

**Mr Ramsay:** Have you considered maybe asking the auditor to come to this committee to get his suggestions about how we could close that accountability loop, as you describe it?

1600

**The Chair:** Mr Ramsay has suggested that perhaps we as a committee might consider inviting the auditor, and I would agree with that. I believe it would be inappropriate for me to meet privately with the auditor. I don't think that's my role as the Chair of this committee, and out of respect for his position. However, he would be most willing to have an official invitation from an all-party committee of the House. He would be more than willing to attend. So far I've resisted anything other than that.

**Mr Ramsay:** Would you take my suggestion as a proposal, that we do that?

**The Chair:** In the form of a motion, we can do just about anything. I would suspect, however, that we would want to further test the waters. Each of the committees in question is chaired by a member of a different caucus, so perhaps we should start with making some contact with the other two committees, and say that the auditor might be very pleased to participate in a larger forum where a lot of issues can be discussed and time might be devoted to do that, as opposed to his going from one committee to the other. That's just a suggestion. I know he would be very pleased to respond to very direct questions in that context of the three committees meeting, just as an idea.

**Mr Duignan:** Rather than the auditor come to this particular committee and answer questions, if we're talking with the other two committees, I suggest that maybe it would be appropriate to have a joint meeting of all three committees and have the auditor in at that point and direct his comments to all three committees, and in turn have time for questioning, rather than going back and forth between three different committees. At least that way everybody has the same story at the same time.

**Mr Fletcher:** On the same lines, yes, I'd much rather thrash it out here with us as a committee, and let each other committee do the same thing, and meet as a committee with the auditor then. Then we can thrash it out again. I think we should get together and make sure that we're working together and know where we want to go as a committee. We owe that to the other committees also before we start getting the auditor involved. I concur with what was said earlier. I think that's a good idea.

**The Chair:** Do we wish to convene a subsequent meeting where I will get the additional information that Ray has developed but we didn't have here for you today?

**Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum):** I'm getting it.

**The Chair:** It's on its way, but in terms of giving you an opportunity to absorb it and then come back to a subsequent brief meeting to look at those issues, that might be one suggestion. I might also entertain a motion for us to notify the other two committees again that, "We



haven't heard from you as yet, but we're most anxious to undertake a dialogue," or we can just wait till we hear back from them. Any comments on any of that?

**Mr Arnott:** I agree, and I would so move, that you be instructed to write an additional subsequent letter to the two chairmen asking them for their consideration of our initial question.

**The Chair:** I'm not avoiding calling that a motion, but to be helpful, could it not include sharing with them the information that Ray has researched? Ray has held the hat on all three of these committees from time to time, so perhaps sharing this information that he's researched for our committee with the other committees is part of the reason we're writing them. If that's in order and that's a motion, comments on the motion?

**Mr Duignan:** I think that's a good idea. We need to share information with the other committees, and rather than have another meeting to discuss something, I would rather wait first to hear back from the other committees to find out what their thinking is and what their suggestion is and then sit down and have a look at that and have a full discussion around what all three committees think about it, rather than just thrashing it out ourselves.

**Mr Fletcher:** Can we just have a consensus—

**The Chair:** I have a motion on the floor, so I have to deal with it, and it is in order. It's simply to write a letter showing this committee has on this date discussed the issue contained in the Chair's letter of April 7, that we wish to share with the committees in question additional information and that we await any form of response the

committee deems appropriate. We'll leave it at that. If at the next meeting you want to invite them to a meeting, we can do that if we want to, but at this point, we'll just share the information.

Does everybody understand the motion? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Any other items for the committee? Ray made one reference to a further report, which was copies of estimates processes in selected provinces. This has to do with the reporting of the estimates and any variances between the provinces. If you're interested in that, we'll circulate that to the members. And we'll circulate the other report; I apologize; that was just a communication breakdown at my end.

Is there any other new business other than should we meet again? Technically, we're not ready to go until May 31. Do you want to meet again—Tuesdays and Wednesdays are our days and the House isn't sitting the week of May 23—next week on the 17th or the 18th?

**Mr Fletcher:** Let's meet next Tuesday.

**Interjection:** Why?

**The Chair:** He said, "Why?"

**Mr Arnott:** We'll leave it in your hands to call a meeting should we receive any further developments.

**Mr Duignan:** We'll leave it up to the call of the Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. This meeting stands adjourned. It will be reconvened at the call of the Chair.

The committee adjourned at 1607.









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\***Chair / Président:** Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South/-Sud PC)

\***Vice-Chair / Vice-Président:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

\*Abel, Donald (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

Carr, Gary (Oakville South/-Sud PC)

\*Duignan, Noel (Halton North/-Nord ND)

Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

\*Fletcher, Derek (Guelph ND)

\*Hayes, Pat (Essex-Kent ND)

\*Lessard, Wayne (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

\*Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

\*Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** McLellan, Ray, research officer, Legislative Research Service



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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 31 May 1994

Standing committee on  
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Ministry of the Solicitor General  
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Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 31 mai 1994

Comité permanent des  
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Ministère du Solliciteur général  
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Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES

Tuesday 31 May 1994

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Mardi 31 mai 1994

The committee met at 1539 in committee room 2.

MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL  
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We have convened today to begin six full hours of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services.

We are joined today by the minister, the Honourable David Christopherson, his deputy minister, Michele Noble, and the manager of resource planning, strategic policy and planning division, Mr Al Kosch.

Minister, in accordance with the standing orders, you have up to 30 minutes to present your opening comments, at which point I will call upon Mr Murphy to use his time for the official opposition, and then Mr Runciman to present his opening comments. We'll reserve a further 30 minutes for any follow-up and response you might have.

**Hon David Christopherson (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Members of the estimates committee, I'm pleased to join you today to begin the process of reviewing the 1994-95 estimates for the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services, votes 2801 through 2805.

I'll begin by providing you with the context, in the form of an overview of ministry operations and activities, within the framework of the estimates submission. I want to review with you the ministry's mission and mandate, which now incorporates the goals and strategic directions of what were, up until one year ago, two separate ministries. I will describe for you the new organization and set out some of the key challenges we face as a government in maintaining public safety for the people of this province. Perhaps more importantly, I want to outline the key strategies and corporate directions to which we are committed to enhance public safety in Ontario.

I am joined today, as I will be throughout these proceedings, by Deputy Minister Michele Noble and members of her staff, who will assist me by providing details of the ministry's operations and by answering your questions about funding requirements.

Our objective is to outline ministry policies and operations and to illustrate the commitment of this government to manage its public safety responsibilities efficiently and in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

We will be asking members to vote on the total ministry appropriation of \$1,178,506,400, representing both capital and operating expenditures for the fiscal year 1994-95. I remind the committee that this total reflects

the activities of both the former Ministry of the Solicitor General and the former Ministry of Correctional Services. When you pare away increases attributable to cost escalation and amounts annualized from items funded for only part of last year, this total represents virtually no increase in the ministry's total request over 1993-94.

As this committee will be aware, following the reorganization of the public service announced on February 3, 1993, we began the task of integrating the two former ministries into a single entity. The single most important prerequisite of the new organization was that it be capable of meeting the requirements of an increasingly large and complex criminal justice agenda. I am pleased to report that we are on track with an integration plan which was developed with a view to providing an appropriate structure for the future needs of the new integrated organization.

We are now the largest Ontario government ministry, with approximately 16,000 staff members working in more than 750 locations throughout the province. That includes headquarters and regional offices, OPP district headquarters and detachments, coroners' offices, probation and parole offices, and correctional facilities. The ministry also has service delivery arrangements with over 260 community-based forensic pathologists and 360 community-based social service agencies.

We have direct administrative responsibility for two dozen federal and provincial statutes, all involved with the preservation and enhancement of public safety. Provincial statutes include: the Anatomy Act; the Coroners Act; the Egress from Public Buildings Act; the Emergency Plans Act, 1983; the Fire Accidents Act; the Fire Departments Act; the Firefighters Exemption Act; the Fire Marshals Act; the Hotel Fire Safety Act; the Lightning Rods Act—we've got to get that transferred; the Ministry of Correctional Services Act; the Ministry of the Solicitor General Act; the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act; the Police Services Act, 1990; the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act; the Public Works Protection Act; and the Retail Business Holidays Act.

In fact, public safety is the primary purpose for the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. Our mission is to contribute to the public safety and security of Ontario and to do so in such a way as to reflect community needs and enhance social justice.

The ministry carries out its work through the development of policies and the provision of services that are both fair and accessible. Specific responsibilities include: operation of the Ontario Provincial Police; offender

supervision and rehabilitation in institutions and in the community; policy development and advisory services for regional and municipal policing services; forensic and coroner services; fire investigation and prevention; emergency planning; and animal welfare.

To offer some perspective on the breakdown of resources allocated among these various activities, I draw your attention to the pie chart at the top of page 7 of the estimates briefing book. As you will note, the operation of the OPP and Ontario's correctional services consumes fully 89% of the ministry's annual budget. It is worth noting, as shown in the chart at the bottom of that same page, that 76% of the total allocation goes to salaries and wages.

The challenges facing the ministry in both the near and long term are substantial. Despite a continuing climate of fiscal constraint in the public sector, public expectations of the criminal justice system are growing. We're also facing in Ontario an increasingly diverse population requiring specialized services relating to language, culture and level of physical and mental ability. The public expects and deserves a more integrated, more efficient and more service-oriented justice system.

In order to meet these challenges, the ministry recognizes that it must find better ways to conduct business. These ways cannot be simply less expensive but must maintain and improve upon the high quality of services currently provided in support of public safety.

The Ontario Provincial Police have taken the challenge of increased efficiency to heart with their approach to community policing. As with many organizations in the public and private sector, the OPP is undergoing a period of change, change that is being driven by the growing demands of an increasingly diverse public for a justice system that is more effective, more sensitive, more responsive and more accountable, and by the economic conditions facing our country and our province.

It is within this environment that we must find ways to work together with municipalities, police services boards and police associations to find more appropriate ways of delivering law enforcement services in partnership with the communities we serve.

The OPP is committed to the philosophy of community policing. This philosophy is based on the premise that the communities we serve have a right and a responsibility to be partners in establishing policing priorities. The OPP's strategic plans are based on this philosophy in recognition of the need for a well-trained generalist policing service supported by traffic management, crime prevention and detection, and administrative excellence. Its principal challenge for the future is to maintain the crucial combination of the right people, the right equipment and, perhaps most importantly, the right organizational structure, one that is capable of sustaining and nurturing an effective policing service throughout the 1990s and into the next century.

In order to position the OPP to be able to meet changing public expectations, a comprehensive organizational review was initiated last November. The review is based on re-engineering principles similar to those which have produced dramatic results in the private sector.

Among other things, we expect this organizational review to assist the OPP: to identify the proper balance between corporate and divisional responsibilities; to find ways to streamline operations, enabling greater efficiency and improved service; to maximize the use of technology to guide the delegation of decision-making to the optimal level; to identify ways to maintain a strong corporate culture that will attract and retain the best people available; and to help create in the OPP a continuous learning environment that supports high-quality decisions and makes the most of employees' skills.

#### 1550

I'm looking forward to the results of the organizational review, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of this calendar year, as a blueprint which will help the OPP to adapt to its rapidly changing environment.

Innovation and creative solutions are also much evident in offender management strategies employed by the ministry's Correctional Services division. It's a fact of life that offenders are in our midst, and locking all of them up is not and should not be our sole means of dealing with unlawful behaviour.

As with all other provincial jurisdictions, only a fraction of those under correctional supervision are in institutional custody. The remainder, more than 87% of offenders, more than 60,000 people, on any given day receive their correctional supervision while remaining in the community on probation, on parole or as part of another disposition.

Institution custody is none the less an important part of our mandate and one that is taken very seriously. Among those who are sentenced to provincial custody, the average sentence length is approximately 79 days for adult males, about 60 for female offenders. The maximum term of incarceration for adults sentenced to provincial institutions is two years less a day, and five years for young offenders. Others in custody include those being held on remand to await court proceedings. This group accounts for approximately one third of the 8,000 adult and young offenders held under this ministry's jurisdiction on any given day.

Nearly all offenders return to the community eventually. All are affected in some way by the way they are treated while in correctional custody.

The mandate of our institutions is to provide secure humane accommodation and programs in respect of dispositions given by the courts, to maintain public safety and to promote the social adjustment of offenders in the community. Programs are geared to offenders' immediate needs. Due to the duration of provincial sentences, staff must focus on maximum benefit for limited time available in custody.

The ministry has no control over the volume of work coming to institutions. Inmate capacity is an ongoing concern. Workload patterns are susceptible to dramatic shifts resulting from external influences, such as periods of increased enforcement in recent years against such offences as drug abuse, spousal abuse, impaired driving and other changes to legislation.

Correctional supervision has also been affected in



recent years by the growing complexity of offender needs. We provide programs to respond to these special needs, be they educational or health-related; for example, inmates who require psychological or psychiatric help.

Work environments for some 6,800 institutional service employees are atypical. Some are rather harsh. Over half of all Ontario institutions were built before 1931; 14 of the jails are over 100 years old. Because of the enormous capital costs, community sensitivities and our ongoing climate of fiscal restraint, capital construction has been severely limited over the last decade.

Risk is a constant factor to correctional services. Our challenge is to manage the risk as effectively and efficiently as possible. As the Provincial Auditor observed in his report last fall, we are successful in managing correctional risk in comparison with other jurisdictions.

The Correctional Services division is undergoing a number of important internal studies, including a detailed institutional staffing analysis, a review of its recruitment and training methods for correctional officers, and an assessment of early release practices.

Despite the daunting scope of its role in society, corrections continues to attract competent, capable employees, administrators and volunteers who recognize the importance of hope and perseverance in the face of difficult odds. It is a very unique and demanding discipline, and those who work in it are to be commended.

Over the next decade and beyond, one of the key issues facing Correctional Services will be addressing increasing demands for offender supervision while facing the challenges of continuing financial pressure.

The ministry is committed to the development of an enhanced range of services based on assessed individual needs in both supervision and rehabilitation. This will allow existing resources to be focused on services for those requiring help and supervision according to individual needs and circumstances.

Rehabilitation is a guiding principle in the Correctional Services division's work with offenders. One of the most effective ways to protect society is to provide opportunities for rehabilitation to those individuals who have come into conflict with the law.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to unlawful behaviour, but there are many types of intervention, including psychological treatment, education, literacy training and work experience programs, which, in combination with appropriate levels of supervision, have been shown to reduce the likelihood of future antisocial behaviour.

Case load and workload issues will continue to be addressed by expanding community-based options for non-violent offenders and focusing more expensive institutional resources on those who pose a genuine threat to community safety.

Community safety is also the main thrust of the ministry's policing services division whose purpose is to promote policing excellence.

The policing services division was formed in 1988 following a realignment of the responsibilities of the Ontario Police Commission. The commission, now called

the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services, retained its quasi-judicial function while advisory and support services were transferred to the policing services group.

The division is organized into four key areas: police support programs; standards and new programs; the Ontario Police College; and intelligence services.

The overall role of the division is to monitor police services and police service boards to ensure the provision of effective policing in compliance with prescribed standards; to assist in the coordination of police services; and to oversee the development and communication of policing standards and policies throughout all jurisdictions in the province.

Through its police service advisers, this division provides support, guidance and advice to Ontario's police community, including police service boards and municipal police services. The division also operates the Ontario Police College.

The focus of the ministry's public safety division is to devise methods of minimizing or eliminating hazards to persons and property. The division comprises the office of the fire marshal, the office of the chief coroner, the Centre of Forensic Science, the forensic pathology branch and Emergency Measures Ontario.

The office of the Ontario fire marshal is responsible for fire safety and investigation and for supporting municipal fire services through a variety of advisory, training and other support programs.

Environmental changes facing municipal fire services, including growing public demand in such areas as hazardous material spills, medical emergencies and rescue, coupled with a continuing climate of fiscal restraint, have begun to signal the need for change in the traditional ways in which fire services are administered, operated and funded.

The office of the fire marshal is positioned to play a key leadership role in coordinating needed change in the delivery of fire protection and prevention services in Ontario through legislative amendments; review of the emergency response services; advisory services to municipalities; and training of fire service personnel.

Emergency Measures Ontario, formerly Emergency Planning Ontario, is responsible for coordinating the development of emergency plans to deal with incidents which pose significant risk to life, health or property.

Much of the emphasis on emergency planning is focused on reducing risks, particularly those posed by industrial accidents, at the source and in preparing an adequate response in the event of an accident.

EMO works with industry, municipalities, other provincial government ministries and responsible authorities to develop and test response plans and establish resource-sharing agreements.

The organization is currently implementing a reorganization plan which more accurately reflects its role in helping to develop preparedness and response plans at the local level, hence the recent name change from Emergency Planning Ontario.

Part of this reorganization involves regionalizing its

resources, enabling greater community access to advisory services and augmenting its training and education capabilities. Through the reorganization of its resources, Emergency Measures Ontario is strengthening its role in emergency preparedness and response and contributing to the enhancement of public safety.

1600

The Coroners Act mandates the chief coroner to protect human life and to ensure the just application of the law by investigating sudden unexplained or unexpected death. The role of the coroner has traditionally been seen as investigative. However, in recent years the focus has shifted to prevention and public safety.

Today the coroner's office selects those cases in which an inquest will result in the in-depth examination of systemic problems that may be creating an undue risk to public safety. Such inquests may produce recommendations which can lead to the elimination of hazards and the prevention of future deaths.

The ministry's forensic services comprise the forensic pathology branch and the Centre of Forensic Science.

Forensic services play an integral role in the administration of justice by providing scientific analysis of evidence to assist police and the courts in the prosecution of violent crime.

The Centre of Forensic Science is currently revising and updating standards for the identification, collection and transportation of evidence.

Staff and fee-for-service practitioners under contract to the ministry are regarded as highly credible, expert witnesses in court proceedings and have earned the ministry a strong reputation for scientific excellence.

The Centre of Forensic Science recently received accreditation by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, Laboratory Accreditation Board.

In conclusion, the ministry expects that all of its activities will be conducted in a manner that reflects service excellence.

The ministry will continue to place a high priority on recognizing the contributions of its employees. We are committed to developing specific activities to improve the work environment and to enhance job satisfaction among employees, while recognizing the changing nature of the workforce and the rapid emergence of new technologies.

We are committed to ensuring that all service providers have the skills and training necessary to discharge their responsibilities effectively. We also recognize the need to create workplaces that are fair, accessible and physically safe within the requirements of the work, and to respect individual dignity and privacy.

To support our vital human resources, the ministry encourages innovative management styles that support employee participation, enhanced communication, accountability, flexibility and performance excellence.

The vast scope and complexity of ministry responsibilities, coupled with the current climate of fiscal constraint, combine to create a formidable challenge for our newly integrated ministry.

However, through sound fiscal management and

sensitivity to our changing environment, I am confident that we can continue to meet the challenge of public safety in a manner that brings credit to this government and this province.

I hope that I have been able to give members a reasonable understanding of the complex and challenging work of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services.

I would invite committee members to further explore the areas I have raised in the time that remains for these estimates proceedings.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Pat Hayes):** Thank you, Mr Minister. Mr Murphy, you can make your comments. You have 30 minutes.

**Mr Tim Murphy (St George-St David):** I think what I will do is briefly give a sense of some of the areas I want to touch on. I don't know whether you would have the officials here necessarily, and I'll go through it, and then hopefully we'll have a bit of time left and we can start talking about some of the answers.

I don't think there is any doubt that in terms of Solicitor General and Correctional Services at the top of my agenda items are crime and public safety and fire safety, and I want to explore a few things in that area.

What I'm going to start with is the current status of the Fire Services Review Committee, and I guess the 20 amendments that it has proposed. I know that you, Mr Minister, had to postpone a meeting you had scheduled for today because of the estimates interrupting that meeting, and I've heard different reports about whether you intend to proceed with some kind of draft legislation which follows up on the report of some, I guess, months or even years ago now. There is, needless to say, still some dispute over certain of the recommendations between various of the stakeholders, and I want to get a sense of that.

To follow up on a related item, what has also been a bit troubling to me is the degree to which the fire service review process will be or has been impacted by the social contract process at the same time. I have been led to believe that the Ministry of Labour and the social contract division, now renamed the productivity department or something like that—whatever its new title is—is independently through the municipal sector table doing some negotiations around budgetary items and right-to-strike provisions for firefighters with a view to having those kinds of issues come through that process to the Legislature at some point.

I want some clarification from your perspective on the status of what's happening at the municipal sector table as related to fire services and police services, but most of this arises in the context of fire services from what I hear, what the productivity group, the social contract group is doing. As much as anything else, this may be a process of calming fears that may not be valid. I am passing on what I am being told, and it may be that it's the Ministry of Labour that is proceeding without adequate consultation with you, I don't know, but that's one of the things.

Another area, moving on from fire service and police



matters, I want to talk a bit about is the OPP in small communities. What I would like, if you have it, is a sense of those communities. I gather, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but the historical relationship was that for communities under 5,000 you'd provide the policing through the OPP free. That is no longer the case and may not have been for some time. What I would like to know is, how many communities that fit in that category are getting free policing, how many are having to pay and how much they are paying?

Related to that, I'd also like to know what the current plan in the ministry is in terms of keeping open OPP detachments or closing them. Is there a closing schedule? That may very well be part of your organizational review that you've undertaken, but it may not be.

In addition, I have attempted to get some sense of what's happened with the Junger inquiry recommendations. A constituent asked for it and we've had to bounce around a bit. We approached the Civilian Commission on Police Services and it said, "You ain't going to get a response to it except by FOI," which I didn't think was a particularly helpful way to approach it. We've gone to the Metro police services board and haven't yet heard from it. I'm wondering if I can get a sense of what the response is and why the Civilian Commission on Police Services would tell me the only way to get it was through an FOI application.

In addition, and this may be under the Attorney General's bailiwick but I'll raise it because it may involve administration by the police, there's the question of release of offenders and notification of the public. A year ago or so I think the Attorney General had indicated setting up guidelines for that. I have not seen the guidelines. I may have missed them or they may not yet be produced, but I'm wondering what the status of that is.

In addition, and again you can correct me if my information is wrong, my understanding is that the fine option program has been cancelled and I'm wondering what impact that has had, if any, on how much resources that has eaten up in corrections in terms of more people being in jail versus other kinds of things. You may not have that, but I'd like to seek that from you if I can.

1610

Secondly, and I guess ultimately it's an Attorney General's bailiwick but of very great interest to police officers, is the special investigations unit. There is, I think, probably a reasonably widely shared view that the statutory mandate is not very clear, that the protocol between officers and the SIU in circumstances where investigations arise is not itself clear and that the SIU probably doesn't have the resources to do the job it seems to want to do.

What I'm wondering is, as Solicitor General, as my friend Mr Runciman calls you, "the top cop," what views you represent to the Attorney General in terms of where he should go with that. It was again over a year ago in fact, when Mr Hampton was the Attorney General, that he at one point had promised legislation.

Now I'm going to sort of jump around a bit, not that I haven't before. In regard to the Coroners Act, a couple

of inquests have talked about requiring replies within a certain time frame. I believe the Chair of our committee has a private member's bill on the issue, and I'm wondering what the view of the government is on requiring mandated responses within a fixed period of time.

I'm sure this isn't on the top of your list either, but Raj Anand did report on private investigators and security guards ages ago, in fact in the previous administration, and that proposal had died. I'm wondering in terms of the number of registered private investigators, how many we have. Has there been a growth in that and the personnel involved in monitoring the licensing of private investigators and the money spent on that?

I'll give you the background of my concern so you can understand, which is I think we've seen a proliferation of private investigators with an ever-growing role for them as people come to rely on police to do some of that stuff less and less for good and bad reasons. In my private life I had an opportunity to act for some of these security guard companies. They operate in a grey area really, and I'm concerned that the training they get is inadequate to the task that they're often asked to do.

I also want to talk a bit about the Toronto Humane Society, which resides in my riding, and sort of what's happening with that. Now don't look at me suspiciously, Minister. I have to represent my constituents.

**The Chair:** Even four-legged ones.

**Mr Murphy:** Yes, exactly.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Murphy:** That's right, yes. Very important to seniors in my riding in fact.

There was a review at some point and I wonder whether we are going to see any changes. I guess there's some concern about the possible financial failure of the humane society itself, whether there are contingency plans for that and what you will you do if that happens. I believe it was Mr Mills who spoke for you on that.

There was a private member's bill which came forward in the Ottawa area to exempt the humane society there from taxation because of a court ruling, if I'm not mistaken, and I'm wondering if that position still applies and what was going to be done, if anything, in terms of looking at the tax exemptions.

I have some other questions related to the humane society, but I will just give you the written copies of those and they can be responded to later or in written form, which is fine.

I also want follow up on a couple of particular things. I had been following the OPP statistics in terms of the number of officers versus the number of Criminal Code incidents. There had been an increase in Criminal Code incidents. I couldn't get the final 1993 figures the last time I did this, just because I think I was too early. The staffing level had dropped slightly, but I know there had been an announcement of a hiring of some new number.

So I would like if you could get for me, now that you, I suspect, have the full 1993 figures, the last two or three years of OPP staffing and Criminal Code incidences dealt with by the OPP. I know those stats are collected; it's just basically updating them.



Now, in terms of a couple of particular things. On page 19 of the estimates book—and I'm just asking for an explanation and you can provide it now or later, if you know it—but you'll notice, in terms of both coroners and forensic services and in fire safety services, there seems to be a reasonably significant drop in the number of cases completed: in the forensic sciences, almost 800, so a 10% drop; also a big drop in the number of coroners' inquests, and then also a fairly substantial drop in the number of investigations conducted under the fire safety services. I'm wondering why that is. It may be external events, but it may also be manpower, person power, and other training exercises, and I would like an explanation of how that has come to be the case.

Also, again jumping around, I just have a concern about the contingency emergency planning related to Darlington. What's the status of that and has it been done to the satisfaction of the local community? I don't know whether you've done an assessment of it, but I have some understanding that the hydronuclear emergency plans aren't entirely up to par and that some internal assessment has been done which indicates this. I'm wondering if you could confirm or deny, as they say, and indicate to me what the status is.

I know you issued a directive to police forces related to hate crimes, and two things I wanted to highlight there. One is a discussion of women being included in that and what the logic was for not including them in that directive. Secondly, I believe it basically said that police forces shall have someone whose job it is to be responsible for hate crimes.

My sense is that in some of the smaller forces, pressed financially for a variety of reasons, that's not happening. I'm wondering if you could confirm that for me and what those smaller forces are doing or whether there is an OPP officer. I know there's a Project H, although there's some debate about its utility in the community, and I want to know whether you are planning that it's going to provide a role to those smaller communities in terms of hate crimes.

Finally—well, not quite finally—but the social contract. I'm impressed that you spent a half-hour and never mentioned it once.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** We're working on it.

**The Chair:** It happens in caucus all the time.

**Mr Murphy:** I wanted to talk a bit about the impact of the social contract and I realize there are a few levels.

In my riding, 51 Division is the downtown division that covers the biggest chunk of the riding, they've suffered. Basically, their full complement, I believe, is 24 and they only have 16 foot patrol officers in an area where, in a six-month period, they had 460 weapons offences alone. What they're telling me is, it's the social contract; that in order to make the cuts and accommodate the needs that are coming at them, they're having to take it away from foot patrol.

I know that you're going to say, "Well, go talk to the police services board and Metro council." What I'm wondering is—there is a responsibility that rests on your shoulders as the person responsible for public safety in

the province—what monitoring, if any, you are doing of the impact of the social contract on policing in municipalities, especially in the context of community policing.

I know that foot patrols don't necessarily equal community policing, but in downtown places like my riding they really do. It's clear they're having a negative impact and it's putting a real strain—there's a drug problem that 51 Division is trying to deal with, and in the last year nine of the 10 drug officers, for example, have suffered injury in the course of their duties and they're finding a great difficulty replacing them to go back out there, because, again, I'm told, of social contract impacts.

**1620**

So what I'm wondering is how you are monitoring that impact. Is it affecting the level of policing? If you're not monitoring that impact, is anybody else and if you aren't, why aren't you?

Great. Related to the social contract, I did want to talk about whether you've had enough time to measure your achievement in terms of social contract targets for savings versus actual savings. Let me just give you a sense of that. For example, on page 5 of the estimates, in your ministry administration category, your interim actual for 1993-94 is \$67 million and your estimate for 1994-95 is \$56 million.

In fact, your estimate for 1993-94 had been \$60 million and you overshot it by \$7 million. So what you're going to try to do is to achieve in this year almost a \$11-million, about 16% or 17%, reduction in ministry administration expenditure in one year. Maybe I'm reading those numbers wrong, but I'm just looking for an explanation of (a) how come it overshot by over 10%, and maybe that's explained by the merger in part, and (b) how it is you're going to achieve the \$56 million, or an \$11-million cut.

On the same page, just following up on a different direction of questions, in terms of the estimates, interim actual for 1993-94 and the estimates for 1994-95 under the OPP category, you see that there's almost a half-billion-dollar estimate for OPP—

**Interjection:** What page are you on?

**Mr Murphy:** I'm on page 5 of the estimates book.

You'll see the estimate was \$497 million, interim actual \$482 million and then the estimate is back up to \$497. How come the estimate is higher than the actual? Is there phasing in of something? Why are we going back up or why did the actual not meet the estimate? Just an explanation of that variation in the figures.

Your decision to go to the new weapons and how the ministry plans on funding the purchase, or whether it does plan on assisting in the purchase of the new weapons, holsters etc, my understanding is that will end up being about \$1,000 per weapon, including the holster. That's just hardware expenditure and you'll have obviously additional training expenditure, I would assume.

So the question is if there is any plan for assisting the smaller forces in purchasing them, or any forces at all, whether or not there will be assistance in providing for the training or whether the municipal forces will be required to bear that themselves. What's happening with

the old guns? I know you've sent out letters to some municipalities that have decided to destroy the weapons, but I'm wondering whether that has been a uniform response. What have police forces done with the old weapons as they've replaced them?

I want to go back to the fire services issue again, and that's the office of the fire marshal. You made a reference to a new role for it with supportive legislative change, and I'm wondering what that legislative change is. I didn't see, and I might have just missed it when I read through it, the fire marshal's line item pulled out somewhere. I may have just missed the page, but I'm wondering what the supports are for it. Is it continuing at the same level from year to year? Because my understanding is the Ministry of Labour is identifying the fire marshal's office as the training vehicle for some of the training that's coming through Occupational Health and Safety Act changes that may be coming out of the Ministry of Labour. I might be wrong on that, but (a) I want to find out what the current status of the funding of the fire marshal's office is, and (b) more specifics about the plans you refer to in your opening statement related to that office.

One of the things that I've had some people in my constituency approach me about is the relationship between expenditure control plan layoffs and social contract layoffs. Now, in theory there aren't supposed to be any social contract layoffs, but we all know they happen. The problem is that there's a fund in a social contract layoff to which employees can have access in theory, which I believe was 10% of the total savings, if I'm not mistaken, for retraining, which expenditure control plan layoffs don't have access to. I'm wondering, do you have that problem? Where has it happened? Do you keep separate lists for expenditure control plan layoffs versus social contract layoffs? This would be, obviously, in the areas within which you have direct jurisdiction.

The Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System report, which is ongoing, and an interim report on Corrections raise some significant concerns. There are also some concerns, I believe pointed out by correctional managers, about the methodology used. What's your response to the correctional managers' response, if you follow what I just said?

There are other little bits which we can pick up as we spend the last of our six hours together, which I'll pick up later. But that is sort of a bit of a scattergun approach to some of the issues that I want to talk about.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Can I get some clarification, Mr Chairman? In terms of responding, I'll respond at the end with everything that I have now. How do we handle the staff needing to go back to the ministry and provide information to give the member a full and complete answer in terms of the following day? How do we do that? Do we just take a few minutes and do it?

**The Chair:** What the custom has been is that staff who are present are making notes, as I'm watching, and your deputy as well. What materials you are comfortable responding to during your half-hour, fine. That which requires additional can be brought—it's helpful if it's in

print form. It's more helpful if it's given to the clerk at the front end of each of our days, so that it can be immediately circulated and therefore questions can flow from that. I generally like to start each session with a brief presentation of those questions to date and they can facilitate further discussion, if necessary, as we move through our rotation. That's how I would propose to continue with these estimates. That's been our custom.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Great. That's very helpful.  
1630

**The Chair:** Mr Murphy, you have five minutes left.

**Mr Murphy:** Okay. I'll throw in a few more questions. We're here; what the heck.

I wanted to get from you, if we could, the number of escapes from provincial correctional institutions in each of the last five years. We had the deputy and her able staff in the public accounts committee at some point in the last few months, and I was wondering if there was an update on the response given at that point to the criticisms made in the auditor's report of functionings within both the Solicitor General and Corrections. There were, for example, the—and I know that some of the response has already started—but there was the example where a cook was left supervising the inmates, and there was a commitment to certain systems being put in place to correct that problem. I just wanted an update on whether that's happened, and if not, why not, and if yes, how far.

**The Chair:** Mr Murphy, for clarification, did you want persons who have escaped from a facility or persons who have been on some form of supervised program that they departed?

**Mr Murphy:** That's a good point. Both, actually, because I know there is the example in Hamilton some months ago of someone who was on supervised leave under supervision of someone else who had been an offender at one point, if I'm not mistaken. It may have been in your backyard. It was in the last six months.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** We'll check.

**Mr Murphy:** Yes. In any event, the statistic I want is for both circumstances, and I thank the Chair for clarifying that.

The particular question related to the impact of the social contract on the correctional services and scheduling issues: how that is working out in correctional institutions. I gather one of the terms used is "backfilling," and whether that's happening and to what extent.

You may not be able to give this figure, but you and I have talked, Minister, in other contexts about crime prevention, and I know that discussions have happened at a federal-provincial level for a crime prevention council. I'm not certain at this point where that's at. It may, in fact, be weeks away. I'm wondering what percentage of your budget is allocated to crime prevention that you can identify. In a related question, there's a variety of community-based programs, from Block Parent, Neighbourhood Watch and a few others. If I'm not mistaken, you give grants, but it's a tiny amount. What amounts do you dedicate to community-based things like Neighbourhood Watch, Vertical Watch, Block Parent programs in terms of support?



The second thing in terms of community grants is that you administer the program funding for sexual assault centres, and there were two or three that ran into difficulties and I believe there were audits done. Again, I think there was one in the Hamilton area that had the difficulty a year or so ago, and what the status of those audits are and whether resignations have occurred, what the current makeup is and how that has worked out.

**Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** Mr Chairman, I don't have a half an hour. I thought we'd be engaging in some dialogue here, and I wanted to focus in on a few subjects, really.

I also am not sure how the process works in respect to inviting individuals who chair agencies, boards or commissions that fall under the jurisdiction of the minister. I would certainly like to have the opportunity to talk to the chief coroner and the chair of the Ontario Board of Parole. I know this doesn't fall under the ministry, but I think it's relevant to a concern of mine related to corrections, and that's Dr Richard Schabas, the chief medical officer of health, related to HIV testing in correctional facilities. I'd certainly love to have the opportunity to discuss that issue with him, because I know he has some strong feelings in that respect.

**The Chair:** For any agency, board or commission within the responsibility of a ministry, it is the custom and the practice that during the estimates process, with notice, invitations can be extended. To the extent that they're accommodated by scheduling, they're required to make every effort to be here.

**Mr Runciman:** As part of a six-hour review?

**The Chair:** Oh, yes. They are here either to make presentations as requested or to respond to questions, but it's helpful if we advise them what you'd like them here for. If it's for an extended period of time, it's helpful if caucuses can coordinate their questions so that it doesn't require persons coming second days, as these people are not always available.

**Mr Runciman:** In terms of Schabas, I think I've made it clear what I'd like to talk about, and that's mandatory testing for HIV of inmates in Ontario correctional facilities, including young offender facilities.

I'm interested in talking to the chief coroner about the Jonathan Yeo inquest, the recommendations flowing from that and how the government has responded or not responded.

With the chair of the Ontario parole board, I'd like to talk about the process there. I'm hoping the minister can respond to some concerns as well in terms of the release of Clinton Suzack, which I've been stonewalled on, in my view, with unjustifiable rationale presented by the minister as to why he hasn't been more forthcoming in terms of the report he received about the release of Mr Suzack and any actions he and/or his officials may have taken in response to that. He's used the justification of the trial of Mr Suzack in Sudbury, which I think just doesn't stand up to scrutiny, and I certainly intend to pursue that more with the minister in terms of how he can justify that.

If you take a look at the terms of reference of the

study, the objectives: "investigate the decision to grant parole to the individual;"—Suzack—"determine whether the decision to grant parole was appropriate in the circumstances; report as to whether the decision was consistent with the mandate of the board; investigate whether the decision to grant parole was in accordance with the board's policies and procedures; provide any suggestions for action that may be indicated by the facts of this particular case."

Of course, the minister has hidden behind the privacy act and the supposed concern for the individual to have a fair trial. I and a lot of Canadians, and Sudburians especially, have difficulty in linking his justification for refusal to release the recommendations and action he's taken with the trial that is coming up at some point, I assume later this year. I want to pursue that and give the minister an opportunity to further elaborate. That's a major concern of mine, and the fact that this thing has been allowed to go under the carpet for the last number of months is something I have a great deal of difficulty accepting and that I know certainly the people of Sudbury and many police officers in this province have a great deal of difficulty accepting.

1640

In terms of the chief coroner, I also want to talk about the Centre for Forensic Sciences and the operation of that facility. We can relate it to—not directly, because I know we will get more arguments—the arrest of Mr Teale and the DNA testing. There were some concerns in terms of that which became public knowledge at the time, of the delays in getting test results, I think about a year before the results were made available. That's just from press reports. That's just an indication of the concerns down there and how much the administration of justice depends on skilled and knowledgeable people who operate that facility. I'd like to talk about the operation and any shortcomings that may be there and what we can do to address them to ensure that the public do not have to have any real concerns about the way that facility operates.

I want to talk a bit about the fact that very little information has been provided—Mr Murphy raised it—about the tender for the new revolvers for the OPP. I'd like to talk a bit about that, the tender bid, the process, how the decision was arrived at, how the tender was developed, and why there apparently was no requirement for any Ontario/Canadian component in that tender offer, just to explore that issue a bit more. I'd also like to discuss the ammunition that's going to be provided for this—I gather it's a .40-calibre weapon—

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Either 9mm or .40-calibre.

**Mr Runciman:** I want to talk about the kind of ammunition that's being discussed and the strengths and weaknesses of the ammunition that's being proposed.

I'd also like to explore a little bit more the issue—it was raised in the Legislature today—of the London situation, the youth porn ring. I've heard a story, whether there's any truth to it or not, that there's some consideration being given by the government to compensating some of the young males who participated in the production of these videos, compensation, I gather, on the basis



that they're being looked upon as victims. I'd like to find out if indeed that is a fact.

I'd also like to talk about the employment equity programs within the OPP, how you see that proceeding, any problems you may see arising as a result of achieving your goals over a period of time in terms of the number of women and minority groups within the OPP ranks.

Some OPP officers approached me with concerns—whether they're founded in reality or not I do not know—about having a significant proportion of women in those roles, what happens in terms of a spate of pregnancies and so on, which could cause a serious shortage of person-power within the ranks of the OPP. The minister can shake his head, but those are concerns I'm hearing from police officers, so I think they should be addressed.

I'd like to also have some discussion at some point about the question of race and crime statistics and what the government is doing in that respect, if anything, what the views of the government are about that particular issue. I notice there's an article in one of the Toronto papers today by a member a visible minority in terms of his support for the compilation of these kinds of statistics and how, in his view, it would help visible minorities and others in terms of the concerns that are out there among the broader community.

What else? I'm sure there are other things that will arise during the course of the discussion that at the moment I can't think of.

**The Chair:** Mr Runciman, thank you very much. I've noted the three requests you've made. Are there any other requests of members to have either staff or representatives of agencies, boards or commissions affiliated with the ministry? And am I to understand that if the chief coroner is unavailable, the deputy coroner will suffice, or if the chair of the parole board is unavailable, the vice-chair?

**Mr Runciman:** I guess so. I'd prefer the chair of the parole board especially.

**The Chair:** That's understood. If the chair can't make it, that's it?

**Mr Runciman:** We'll try the vice-chair, sure.

**The Chair:** Just for purposes of instruction, I believe the chief medical officer assigned to do the HIV testing may not necessarily be associated with the ministry—

**Mr Runciman:** He's not.

**The Chair:** —but may have done work. It's not a ruling on my part—a request can be made—but I'd need the support of the committee to take up the time in that area with that person being called forward. I'd need their permission, since we're in a bit of a dilemma there in terms of the fact that they're in a different ministry, even though they've been doing some work in corrections. The work is certainly the subject of discussion, but asking someone to attend with the standing order authority of this committee, we're on weak ground there.

Okay. I will leave that in the deputy's or the minister's hands to make those invitations, and they can report to the committee as soon as possible. Mr Duignan, a question?

**Mr Noel Duignan (Halton North):** It's just that when I was in the public accounts committee we discussed the whole question of special education and how much that budget—

**The Chair:** I have to follow the standing orders in terms of recognition. I have to defer now to the minister and then we'll order our business. I didn't mean to interrupt you, but I thought it was a question about process.

If I may, Minister, if you'd like to use your time to do some of your response now, that would be appreciated.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Thank you very much. We've certainly covered a wide range of the responsibility we have in this large ministry. Let me say at the outset that I will address the issues as I've caught them as best I can and then will attempt to provide, as was suggested by the Chair, in writing or certainly verbally tomorrow those things I'm not able to respond to in detail today or fully, and also any matters that I may have missed. As you were talking I took them down, but if I've missed any and you come back to me, I will be pleased to do that, given that the time is almost 5.

Fire Services Review Committee: I'll take them just in the order that I have them here. I've made a commitment to leaders of the fire services, both chiefs and the union, as well as others, that I would endeavour to move that process into some real results, meaning legislation. My sense, and the issue goes back to the time of Mr Murphy's party being in government—he wasn't here but his party was in government—is that it's been a long process, for two reasons, I think.

One is that the scope of the work that's being done is vast. It's taking 50 years of problems that have built up, because nothing's been done for that length of time, and also trying to merge all the existing pieces of legislation into one. So it's the scope of the work, and then also the complexity and, quite frankly, the controversy within the fire services community around the issues that were there.

Both his government and mine, my predecessors, have sought to find as much compromise and common ground as possible before moving ahead and forcing it down people's throats. I am trying to do the same thing. You've acknowledged the meeting that I shifted from today. The purpose of that meeting is so that I have a very clear picture where everybody stands and all the players, all the partners are hearing where each other is at the same time. Then from there we will decide what the appropriate next steps are, set together a time frame and goals and objectives and move on them. That's what I've committed to do and that's what we will do.

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In terms of the social contract implications, I would look to the deputy to talk about the productivity committee aspect of it, but I will state that in my discussions with the fire marshal, he has been monitoring, since the implementation of the social contract, the impact in various communities, and at this point he has not determined that there has been a significant negative impact on the ability of communities to provide essential fire services, although he does continue to monitor that. I

acknowledge that chiefs and others have expressed concerns, but the fire marshal is assuring me that right now there is no statistical evidence to support the fact that we have a significant problem. But again, I have asked him and he has agreed to continue to monitor that closely because it's obviously an important issue to us. Maybe the deputy wants to comment on the productivity committee.

**Ms Michele Noble:** I could just indicate that there is in fact, within the municipal sector agreement, a reference to certain aspects of bringing the labour relations issues in that sector more in line with the Ontario Labour Relations Act. There is not an actual piece of work being done at the moment, but there has been some recent discussion at the officials' level to simply note that this is in the agreement and it is something that needs to be addressed, and what's really being discussed at the moment is the degree to which these kinds of issues are already potentially being addressed as a result of other processes, as distinct from needing to be addressed as a separate issue, so that's not yet been determined.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Thank you. I want to touch on your—because I want to try and touch on all the issues, if I can—the policing in the small communities, what we call equitable financing within police services. You may have read the clippings lately where I characterize the whole thing as a mess, and I think all would agree that it is. One cannot defend with any credibility the why and wherefors of how police financing is taking place in the province of Ontario. I'm not going to suggest that I am unique to that. It needs to be resolved and we're undertaking to do that.

The specific questions you ask on under-5,000, how many, those kinds of stats, I will undertake to get for you.

**Detachment closures:** There's been a number of announcements recently that have been raised in the House and we've talked about it there. In all cases, the community has been consulted with. I realize there are some who are suggesting that they would have preferred more consultation. My understanding is that is a minority, in terms of the number of communities involved. In the vast majority, while no one is really pleased, they understand the undertaking and Commissioner O'Grady has assured me that we are providing at least the same level of service, and in some cases we're able to increase the quality of service and the level of service. I believe that some of the community acceptance of these decisions is a reflection of that.

In terms of other decisions, we are constantly reviewing all aspects. Quite frankly, there isn't a part of governing right now that isn't being reviewed and looked at in terms of: Can it be done differently? Can it be done better? Can we do this in a way that, if we approach it differently, we can provide the same service with less money? All governments, all levels, are doing that. I won't say to you that there won't be further announcements, but I am saying to you that there have been no further decisions taken beyond those that you've already seen and heard about publicly.

I would also add just parenthetically that when I met

recently with officials from the RCMP, I learned that because of funding constraints in their budget they're faced with similar kinds of circumstances and their approach was the same as ours in terms of looking at the regional responsibilities they have, rationalization of services, but in a way that maintains or increases the level of service. I have to say to you very personally that it gave me a good comfort level to know that not only the same action but the same approach to that action was being taken by the federal police service, the highly regarded RCMP.

The Junger commission report: I'm going to follow up on that. You say the OCCPS had advised you. Was that in writing or verbally?

**Mr Murphy:** Verbally.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Let me follow up on that and I'll get a response to you. I don't want to venture into that until I know better.

**Release of names:** We undertook almost a year ago now, as a result of a number of high profile incidents in the province, to look at pulling together a set of guidelines that would be of assistance to police. As you know, changes to the federal legislation, certain court rulings, freedom of information laws both provincially and municipally, and constitutional rights that we all have in Canada make this a complex issue to deal with.

I think we had a good approach. We pulled together representatives from the major stakeholders, spent some time reviewing the various options that were available, trying to find the balance between providing clear-cut direction for police chiefs, in particular, but police services, always allowing as much as possible the discretion that we ask senior officers to make when they're fully apprised of the various circumstances under their jurisdiction.

We were very close to completing that and finding agreement, and then we had an announcement by, I think it was, an appeal court. I could be wrong on this in my memory, but I believe a three-judge appeal court panel ruled on an issue that had a direct impact on this. I'm not a lawyer, but my understanding from the legal community is that they were quite taken aback by how far-reaching the decision was. It clearly had significance for the work we were all doing and that group has now had to reconvene.

We're at the point now where I believe there's a draft document now being circulated, and we're at this point trying to have everyone sign off or deal with the issues that they raise. Then it's still my intention, hopefully if we have agreement but regardless, at some point to issue guidelines that would provide police with some assistance as to how they should approach these things.

Until then, once a warrant has expired, then it really comes down to the police service making a judgement call as to whether they should or shouldn't. There are clear circumstances where they feel comfortable doing this and then others where it starts to get very murky and grey. I want to alleviate that as much as I can, but I don't want to be sending out guidelines that face major problems and complicate things rather than help them.



Fine option program: It is the Attorney General's bailiwick, although the new legislation should assist us in finding alternatives for a lot of people who currently are in jail for relatively minor offences and fine non-payment, which I think is consistent with not just our position but that of your party and that of the third party in terms of trying to find ways of dealing with those things. The deputy may have something.

**Ms Noble:** Just one clarifying comment: The fine options programs that we had been supporting were discontinued as a result of the revised Provincial Offences Act legislation, which is essentially in place to prevent people from going to jail for the simple reason that they cannot pay a fine. Therefore, the fine option program became redundant in that sense.

1700

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** If you have further questions to that, I'll take them and follow up on them.

SIU: You raised the question of statutory mandate and my thoughts on their operation. With regard to the statutory mandate, the Attorney General of course now has responsibility for SIU, based on the recommendation of the Lewis report. That was concluded, I believe, last year; early last year we made the transfer from our ministry to the Attorney General. So I can't answer directly, but I will give you some thoughts and comments on what I believe is the case.

The Attorney General has indicated it's her desire to work with the police community and the SIU to find a way to resolve the impasse in the short term without legislation, if possible. My understanding is that those sorts of meetings are ongoing. Beyond that, you'd really have to ask her directly.

My views have always been that the length of time cases were taking was unacceptable. I made that point very clear to the Attorney General, who also indicated she believed it was unacceptable. I understand they have an audit report and are meeting with the police to talk to them about how they can go about shortening that time and ensuring that the SIU is providing the same level of service to and for the police and the public as we expect from police services. I think she sees that as a priority.

Coroners' inquests, with regard to the Chair's private member's bill and the—

**The Chair:** Who raised that?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Do you guys want to fight it out in the parking lot and come back?

**The Chair:** No, I didn't hear him raise it. I apologize for interrupting. I didn't think anybody raised it.

**Mr Murphy:** We'll wake you up at the end.

**The Chair:** Okay. Once I get the right answer, you can wake me up.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Let me say that the issue of responses by government agencies to coroners' inquests has become a significant part of what the public and juries and the chief coroner expect from those exercises. The coroner has instituted policies where such reporting is required. I know in the Stephenson case the jury itself built in a time frame, and we're seeing more

and more of that, where they're actually putting in their recommendations in their report where governments have to respond within a certain reasonable period of time.

I'm not hearing a lot of people say that we should be taking the recommendations of coroners' inquests verbatim and they should be immediately turned into law, but I am hearing that the juries have a right to hear back from governments and it's been the experience in the past with all parties as government that this hasn't happened.

We haven't ruled out legislation. It's not on the immediate list of pieces of legislation that we're looking at, but that does not in any way and has not and will not prevent the chief coroner from utilizing this policy and certainly doesn't prohibit the movement of legislation in the future.

Security guards: Most of this was detailed answers that you asked for and I will undertake to provide those.

The humane society and animal welfare act review: As you know—I don't have the paper in front of me—we have had the initial consultation with the stakeholders. Then there's been a report as a result of that which was generated and submitted back to the stakeholders. We've asked them for their comments on that report and we're now in the process of analysing those responses and determining what the makeup of a new piece of legislation should look like. I'll doublecheck this, Tim, but I believe that is exactly what I'm answering to constituents such as yours who are writing to me. I'll confirm that with you again tomorrow. But in terms of where we are, that's where we are.

**Mr Murphy:** Mr Chair, if I can just interrupt, I think I indicated I would table some written questions related to that, and I'll do that through you now.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** On issues around the humane society, the tax exemptions—I think some of those are in your written questions—I'll review that and these questions for getting back to you.

Also, the OPP stats: You asked for an update of the stats, the number of officers and the number of Criminal Code incidents, and I'll undertake to give you the most up-to-date information I can get.

**Mr Murphy:** The drop in conducted investigations.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'll give you the best I can at this moment; if it's not complete, we'll give you more.

On the number of cases, one of the responses you'll hear from me many times throughout this ministry—I suspect others too, but more ours, because we have so many people, 16,000, the highest number in the entire government, and also because the largest percentage of our budget is costs around staff.

On the issue of the early retirement factor 80, that's certainly, I think we would all agree, a good thing to the extent that people feel comfortable that they can retire earlier than they'd planned. That allows them to enjoy a longer retirement, but also it creates jobs. It also allows us, where we are eliminating positions, to do it in the way of attrition; it doesn't affect individuals. I think all those things are positive.



On the downside, however, as private industry has also seen, it does in many cases take away some of your most skilled, experienced people and there's an element of trying to catch up. It's not just a straight hire someone off the street or move someone from somewhere else in the government. A lot of these positions, particularly in the area of forensic sciences and coroners and other areas of extreme technical expertise require a while to get people up to steam and fully trained to do the jobs that are available. The number of turnaround-per-case days in forensics—I believe that was the issue you raised.

**Mr Murphy:** The drop in number of cases, basically.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Right. The estimate is that it starts to go back up in 1994-95. In fact, a lot of these numbers are a direct result of losing the experienced people and the amount of time it takes to bring people back into the system and have them skilled. For instance, for some of the forensic staff, I believe it takes up to two years. Even when you hire them qualified to come in at line entry, it takes up to two years to train them before they can actually be in a position to take on cases and do them properly themselves.

**Mr Murphy:** Is it the same for fire safety services and coroners' inquests?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Coroners' inquests: What is happening now is that as much as possible the chief coroner, again in trying to ensure that valuable taxpayer dollars are being spent in the right areas, and many times that involves a shift, is using more coroners' reviews to do a cursory review. I don't mean to suggest it's not a proper review, but rather than a whole day, full inquest to do a coroner's review, to make an early determination, a first-step determination, on whether or not there should be a full-blown inquest as opposed to jumping immediately to an inquest. Obviously, this can only happen in areas of his discretion.

They have to answer, as always, and be accountable to me and to the public for cases that they may not have done, but it's my belief that we haven't, as a public, lost anything in this. But it is a way to rationalize resources in a more efficient way, and that explains some of it.

1710

I would want to get a little more detail on this, but apparently it's quite deliberate. Again, it's a changed management plan which refocused the program from being a direct service delivery operation to one whose role is educating and advising client groups on a full range of public safety and fire protection and prevention issues. The results of the implementation of the changed management plan are most evident with the reduction of property inspections over the past three years and the increase in consultations with fire and municipal officials. Again, it's part of their mandate to help municipalities provide services. Let me get you more on that.

Darlington nuclear emergency plan: I had a meeting recently with a community group—

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** Durham Nuclear Awareness.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** —Durham Nuclear Awareness, thank you, Mr Wiseman—talking about this issue.

There are a number of recommendations that have come from a panel of experts regarding extending primary zones, the use of KI pills and a number of other amendments.

Of course, I need to say for the record that we do have existing nuclear emergency plans that are adequate to meet the needs. The question is always trying to provide the highest level of safety and security for residents. There is some question on the part of Ontario Hydro whether or not these are steps that are necessary, fall in the category of being necessary or not, and always balancing that against the public need.

Also—I'm going from memory—there have been editorials from some of the communities that are impacted by this raising some of the questions of the necessity of taking these steps given the implications for communities even in their preparedness and the sorts of things that it says to communities.

I raise these points, Mr Murphy, only to advise you that this is not just a clear motherhood issue, but I have committed myself to continuing to work with the experts, with the communities, and to make whatever amendments are necessary to ensure that we have the highest level of protection that is possible, and always within the range of the practical because you could spend probably every dollar of provincial money available in preparation here if you so chose. There's always an element of having to draw the line somewhere, and that's what we're now talking about: Where is that line? That continues to be an active issue within my ministry.

Hate crime standards are part of the public safety and violent crime project through my ministry. We've issued a number of standards. We have a number of other standards that are coming out over the next year and a half. Many of those are in response to the Yeo recommendations and also deal with Stephenson inquest issues as well as areas that we've identified, that community groups have identified and that policing services themselves have identified as requiring standards from the ministry that provide an overall consistency in Ontario, as well as ensuring that all police services know what is expected of them in responding to these.

The hate crime standard was one of the first to be released publicly. We've been in consultation with the Ontario women's directorate—the minister responsible is the Attorney General—and we have commenced an interministerial committee to review the issue. It's not a final position, by any means, that women are being deliberately excluded from this. It is a question, however, of ensuring that this is the best way to deal with those concerns.

I am quite prepared to make the amendments, since it's under my ministerial responsibility, and we have communicated that to the women's groups that have contacted us. It's my understanding that while they still consider this a priority, they understand why we're doing it and are appreciative of the fact that we are moving on it. I don't have the time frames—by the end of the year, Michele?

**Ms Noble:** Yes.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I think it's by the end of the year. The review by the two or three ministries involved will be concluded and we will either advise how we're going to address this in an alternative way and how long that's going to take or make the amendments to the standard as recommended by this group. But we'll continue to keep the community groups apprised of this as we move along. How's my time?

**The Chair:** Another five minutes.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Five minutes. Oh, I'd better hit on some of Mr Runciman's or he's going to feel left out.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Oh, he left already. That speaks volumes.

**The Chair:** Minister, that's unfair. When nature calls, we'll excuse you too. But please proceed; he can read the Hansard.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Okay. I will come back to the other issues you've raised, Tim. I do need to make sure I address some of Bob's concerns.

The expenditure control plan and social contract: Again, much of that is a statistical response and wanting to know—no, that's yours, Tim. You almost got more answers. Bob Runciman. There we are.

Talk to the chief coroner: The Chair has addressed that. I gather we'll work that out as a process.

Suzack: Again, Mr Runciman insists on making allegations from positions that I have taken based on recommendations from the Attorney General. He's certainly free to do that. It does not, however, in any way alleviate my responsibility to ensure that I am upholding the law and doing my job in the way that it has to be done.

Were I to do anything different than what I am doing on the advice of the Attorney General, I believe Mr Runciman and others would be the first to leap to their feet and want to know why I was interfering with the criminal justice process and, quite frankly, I think they'd be quite right in doing so unless I had an adequate explanation for such action.

**Mr Runciman:** Can I interject here? Is this the Ontario parole board you're talking about? I'm sorry I missed it.

**The Chair:** That's fine. I would not recognize any interjections, only points of order. We are addressing some of the concerns raised in your opening statements and we're talking about the Clinton Suzack case, just for clarification.

**Mr Runciman:** A point of order then: From my perspective, it would be helpful to have some dialogue and not simply ask a series of questions and have them, 20 minutes later, responded to and never get into the meat of the matter, but I'm not sure how the process works here.

**The Chair:** Mr Runciman, what will happen is, once the standing order portion of the estimates is dealt with, then we'll get into time allocation where you and the minister will be able to have the dialogue you're seeking

in a more direct and immediate responsive way. The minister has a few more minutes left to respond to some of your initial concerns, and then I will consult the committee as to how we wish to order up the balance of our approximately four hours.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Just to conclude, I still maintain that it's the right decision and I look forward to the engagement later today or tomorrow.

OPP tendering process: I'll give you a detailed response tomorrow on the new Ontario/Canadian component, except to say to you that I've satisfied myself that the process was the proper one, that it met the needs of both the regulation that I changed as well as the standards set out in the response we gave to the Ministry of Labour.

Ammunition: We can talk about that in more detail. There are those in the police community who believe that it should be a hollow-point bullet. I have not been convinced that this is the right step to take at this time or that the need has been conclusively proven. The ammunition that has been authorized in the regulation is comparable to the ammunition that is now used with the existing .38.

1720

The issue of compensation for victims regarding issues of pornography in London is clearly a matter for the AG, and I'm not in a position to respond to that.

OPP and minorities and women: I found your position interesting, to say the least. But let me say again—

**Mr Runciman:** I wasn't taking a position; I was asking a question.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** The question then. Fair enough. I'll provide you with some statistics that will allow us a more factual engagement tomorrow rather than just policy debate today.

On race stats, I think probably we need to have a longer discussion, but it's still the position of this ministry and the government that we're not undertaking to collect crime stats based on race.

However, the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System has advised us that they do intend to address this issue and offer their thoughts and recommendations when they bring in their final report. We await that, and I do so with an open mind to the extent that I want very much to hear what they have to say, but we will not be taking any action prior to considering what they may have to say.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. That completes this portion of the opening comments and questions.

**Mr Runciman:** If the Chair would allow me, since I used up very little of my time and I overlooked one subject area that I wanted to—

**The Chair:** The Chair would like to get guidance from the committee and then we'll assign the time. If I can get the direction of the committee—I'm in the committee's hands as Chair—we have five votes. Do you wish to stack the votes and do you wish to deal with the ministry by panel or do you wish to go by time allocation?



**Mr Wiseman:** Stack.

**The Chair:** We'll stack the votes; that's agreeable. So we'll vote at the end of our discussions.

We have about 35 minutes remaining today on the clock. Let's do 12 minutes each. We'll start with Mr Murphy and then Mr Runciman.

**Mr Murphy:** I used up most of my time and the minister used most of his time responding to me, so I think Mr Runciman could start. It's no problem to me.

**Mr Derek Fletcher (Guelph):** Here you are giving him 12 minutes.

**Mr Murphy:** I'm not waiving my 12 minutes.

**The Chair:** If Mr Runciman would like to proceed first, that's fine.

**Mr Runciman:** I just want to put another comment on the record, which I'm sure the minister may have a brief response to, or maybe he'll reject it out of hand.

I was approached a few weeks ago by a crown attorney who expressed concern about the growth of organized crime as he saw it in the province of Ontario. He was concerned that there was not enough emphasis being placed on curbing organized crime and the growth of it in new areas. We've seen it in drugs and prostitution and so on, but he mentioned specifically credit card fraud. We saw one large arrest, I think, and charges laid recently in that respect.

He talked about cellular phone fraud and illegal gun traffic as well, illegal guns coming into the province through organized crime operations, and felt there was a lack of emphasis at the provincial level in respect to this. I know that the commissioner of the OPP is involved and I think he heads up a federal-provincial organization, municipal organization. I have not had an opportunity to speak to him about this concern.

The crown perhaps got into a political area here as well. He felt there was less emphasis placed on matters like organized crime and other serious crimes because of the government's focus on domestic violence, violence against women and those kinds of issues. He felt that some of the allegations dating back decades were being pursued vigorously by the police, with many of them not having merit in the end.

I'm not taking a position in support of this concern. I'm just saying that it's there and it was raised by a responsible and respected individual who felt that there was too much focus in these areas and who also made the allegation that even in terms of break-and-enters into private residences there's very little investigative effort to try and resolve many of these so-called crimes because police simply don't have the time or the resources any longer to direct their attention to the degree they once did because of their focus in other areas which have been deemed a priority of, I assume, the Attorney General and the government. That's something I'd like to give you the opportunity to respond to.

A couple of things may not fall necessarily in your area. I was talking to a sergeant of the Metro police force a couple of week ago. He had been assigned to a downtown division; I can't recall the number of the division. He was saying that a couple of years ago they had the

highest vehicle theft rate in North America, which I felt was quite astounding. He said that compared to Detroit, New Jersey and those kinds of places, which you automatically think of, this district in Metro had the highest vehicle theft rates in North America.

He said a lot of them were through organized crime gangs and a lot of them were using ethnic young offenders, Vietnamese gangs and so on. One of the concerns they ran into, even though these individuals may end up with several convictions, was the difficulty to have them removed from the country because in their experience and on a regular basis—he certainly indicated this was a fairly regular thing in his experience—many of these people they were bumping into were sponsored by the federal government.

If that sort of thing is being relayed back to you as the chief law enforcement official—I'm not sure; again, it's certainly not an area that falls directly under your jurisdiction—if indeed it's accurate, it should be a concern, because certainly it's a concern of that one police officer. Whether he's reflective of others in the policing community I'm not sure.

This is just a modest issue but one I'm curious about. I know that Susan Eng is serving her second term on the Metro Toronto Police Services Board as a provincial appointee and I'm just curious as to whether or not any consideration is being given to a reappointment of Ms Eng to the services board. That's it for now.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** The issue of organized crime is, and I know this at first hand, a matter of considerable priority with law enforcement agencies, both federally and provincially. There are a number of cooperative efforts that are under way, and I suspect you may know what I'm speaking of.

Let me also preface my remarks by saying that I will have discussions with officials in my ministry because I'm not clear at this moment, sitting here, how far I can go in terms of talking about what activities are happening, again not wanting to compromise any operational activities. But in my sincere desire to give you as much information as I can, I will go, regardless of what I say here today, and check. If there's more that I can add to that, I'll be pleased to do so.

I do know that one of the main reasons that the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario was formed was an attempt to deal with the law enforcement response to the growth in organized crime. In fact it was a recent project, codenamed Gunrunner, undertaken by CISO that led to the recommendations that came to me and ultimately to my cabinet colleagues on the development of the provincial weapons enforcement unit.

Most of that was the result of the intelligence gathered and the analysis of that intelligence within CISO as it pertains to the issue of illegal guns in our communities: the smuggling of them, the selling of them, the use of them. We are uniquely positioned in Ontario to respond to these issues.

**1730**

I must say to you that I have not had anyone of the level of a police chief or the commissioner of the OPP



suggest to me that there is a crisis of any sort as a result of lack of priority or attention or funding in this area. That's not to say there aren't many areas in society that could use more money, that's not to say there aren't more things the police would like to do, but it is to signal to you that no one at that level of responsibility has brought that to my attention.

In fact, in my regular briefings of the activities of the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario and my regular meetings with the OPP commissioner, I am kept apprised at the appropriate level of detail of the kinds of activities that are undertaken by law enforcement officers. I'm generally satisfied that the police have the matter well in hand and that the partnerships they have with their federal counterparts and in some cases international counterparts are sufficient to provide the level of security that Ontarians expect.

Having said that, I will honour the commitment to talk further with my staff, and if there are more details that I can give you in this regard, I'll be pleased to.

I do want to say, though, that with regard to any aspect of policing—by virtue of your question, the suggestion is raised—that is suffering because of the government's focus on domestic violence, sexual assault, hate-biased crimes and matters of that nature, first of all, I don't believe anything is suffering as a result of this and I make absolutely no apologies whatsoever. In fact, I'm extremely proud of the fact that this government has made those priorities.

I think it reflects the kinds of needs that we have in society, and I support wholeheartedly and work in partnership with the Attorney General to continue to pursue issues like this in my role in providing standards to policing. I can tell you that, by and large, the response of the police has been positive in their recognition that they are dealing with these issues on the streets on a day-to-day basis and they want them treated as a priority. Enough said on that.

Two other issues: The other one with the gangs and deportation federally, I have to confess I didn't quite catch from that the salient question to me. I'm sure many staff took notes, or if you want to rephrase it, I'll certainly attempt to give you a response. I'm just saying to you right now I'm not sure what the question is.

**Mr Runciman:** I think it was police frustration with these repeat offenders and their inability to deal with them.

**Mr Murphy:** Fighting deportation.

**Mr Runciman:** And to see them through deportation, yes.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I couldn't give you an answer right now on that. I'll talk with my officials. If there is a part of this that I can respond to, I will. I'll let you know tomorrow, Bob.

On the last one, in terms of the appointment of the chair, the appointment of Susan Eng, that seat, the chair is selected by the board itself. It's the policy of the government that, with very, very few exceptions, we not go beyond two three-year terms. There have been I think one or two exceptions to that which are very unique and

would clearly be seen as such. I can say to you that there's been no final decision in any direction, but any exception to the policy would indeed be a unique one.

**Mr Runciman:** Is this a ministerial appointment or a Premier's appointment?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** They are the Premier's prerogative.

**Mr Murphy:** Upon your advice and consent.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes. I'm a party to those decisions, as I should be, in terms of advising the Premier, but the final decision and recommendation to cabinet is the Premier's in these cases. I can tell you that no decision has been taken and it would be an exception to the rule. That's not to say it can't happen. No decision at this point has been made.

**Mr Runciman:** If there's no discussion, then I'll follow that up with a supplementary. No discussion of that possibility?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Until a decision is taken, anything and all things are being discussed one way or another. It's not an issue that's being leaned on one way or the other right now, Bob. It's an important appointment and we're continuing to look at it. The Premier will make his recommendation to cabinet and they'll make their decision.

**Mr Runciman:** What do you look for when you make those kinds of recommendations to the Premier, especially in Metropolitan Toronto, since it is such a sensitive area in respect to these kinds of appointments? What sort of qualities are you looking for? What sort of message do you want to deliver in terms of the kinds of appointments you make to this board?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** There are a lot of things that we look at. Metro certainly is the largest municipal police service in Canada and one of the most distinguished services in North America—in the world, for that matter. However, many of the qualities we look for are not unlike those we look for on police services boards in much, much smaller jurisdictions. Again, let me say that there's no particular checklist. People can bring different strengths in different ways to different boards, so it's not a question that you have to have experience here, here and here and have this qualification in order to be considered.

I think it's pretty straightforward. We look for people who have a commitment to their community. It helps if people have a background with the law, in one way or another, but not everyone does. Sometimes we deliberately, in seeking a balance, will look for people who have no experience in the law, people who have experience in budgets, people who have served on community boards. On the other hand, Bob, if we have a board that is full of all those people who have budget experience, community service and expertise in certain areas, but no legal background, then we might deliberately seek somebody, because we're always looking for the balance on a board. It really is a question of looking at the community—the board overall should reflect the community—and then looking at the makeup of the board and what will help make it a balanced board.

**Mr Runciman:** You made reference, and we'll pursue this in greater detail, to the Clinton Suzack release by the Ontario parole board. You said you were following the advice of the Attorney General. I assume that you got that advice in writing, since it is such a sensitive area. Could I ask that the advice be tabled with the committee?

**Ms Noble:** I have to check if the advice is in writing. I think the question is whether or not there is anything in the way the advice was given that would also cause a problem in terms of the concerns being expressed.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I can see by your smile that this is not an unexpected response, but there is a letter and we'll get back to you tomorrow on whether or not we feel we can release it to you. If we can, we will.

**Mr Gordon Mills (Durham East):** I'm new on this committee. It seems to me that it's called estimates and it begs the question that we're talking about money. Having understood and known that your ministry has been amalgamated, the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Correctional Services, it automatically begs the question to me in this setting of, what are the savings? Maybe you could put some of that on the record.

*Laughter.*

**Mr Mills:** What are you laughing at? I think it's a very logical question.

**Mr Murphy:** Excellent, the way you are approaching the issue.

**Mr Mills:** Thank you very much, Mr Murphy. It's estimates, for goodness' sake.

**The Chair:** I suspect the minister is dying to answer.

**Mr Mills:** I'm sure he is.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Absolutely, I'll see if I can reach for an answer.

**Mr Murphy:** Just read from the prepared response.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** One of the purposes, of course, in the merger was an overall attempt by the Premier, in building his cabinet, to reduce the cost of government as much as possible. In the past, there have been many ministers who have had joint responsibilities in this government and in previous governments. I think that reflected the obvious attraction of formally merging the two into one, as has been done in most other jurisdictions in Ontario and certainly at the federal level. The Solicitor General is responsible for many of the same areas that I am.

1740

The obvious goal was to achieve as much savings as possible. That will be done through eliminating duplication, mainly in the areas of administration. Over the past year, we've saved approximately \$2.8 million in administrative costs. A number of the corporate function mergers are the reason we were able to do that, such as the corporate policy and resource planning, legal services, communications, deputy ministers' offices and ministers' offices. At the end of our merger plans, in the second year, we'll see annualized savings in the area of \$5.3 million being realized as a result of this merger.

I would say to you that the results have been significant. I think we've achieved the kinds of goals the

Premier was seeking when he merged the ministries. I would also say, from a policy development point of view, that I think we're able to make much better planning decisions and operations decisions in our areas of responsibility in the criminal justice system as a result of having the formal merger take place and being able to, at one table, make a determination of the outcome at the corrections end of the system of actions taken at the Solicitor General policing end, as well as being able to save the cost of providing those services by eliminating the duplication.

In most cases we are enhancing our ability to provide a corporate service overall. I think you'll find that in many cases the response I am able to give in terms of efficiencies that we've wrought out of the system and money that we can save through rationalization is a direct result, or even indirect in some cases, of the merger of those two ministries into one new entity.

**Mr Mills:** Okay. Just briefly, it begs a supplementary question. That merging would obviously result in a great saving in staff. I was just interested to know if they were absorbed within the public service. No layoffs?

**Ms Noble:** In terms of the numbers of staff that were affected, for the most part we've been able to place individuals within the ministry. We still have some people who are affected by relocation as a result of the mergers, and they are being dealt with through the process. I don't think I can say there has been nobody who has been surplus; there are certainly surplus to positions, but we've been working through the government's redeployment plan to ensure that we can try and place them.

**Mr Mills:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I defer to my colleague, but I have more questions if we've got time.

**Mr Duignan:** When I was a member of the public accounts committee for a number of years, the last time we were there we had the Ministry of Education come in. There's some \$1.1 billion provided in special education grants, and parts of the special education grants go to the correctional institutes for education programs.

Is it possible to have the individual in your department who has responsibility for education and rehabilitation be here as well to answer some questions? I would like to know what type of literacy rate there is among repeat offenders, and when they get some education—for example, upgrade their education—whether that offender stops coming back.

You mentioned that education, literacy training and other work experience programs have shown to reduce the likelihood of future antisocial behaviour. I would like to see some stats around that and what you're doing. If that's the case, what are you doing to make sure there are more education/training programs in the institutions?

I have a real concern about young offenders, in particular with zero tolerance in the education system, and if they're thrown out of school and they end up in a young offender program somewhere, what opportunity they have to complete their education and not have any more antisocial behaviour. So I would like some discussion around that whole area.



**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I don't know if we have anybody here today who can give you the level of detail you want, or whether we need to do that tomorrow.

I'm being advised by the deputy that we should bring somebody here. I think what you would like is a fairly detailed response to these questions—they're very specific—and we can best do that tomorrow.

**Mr Duignan:** Exactly. If these programs are shown to work, what are we doing to make sure there are more of these programs available to the offenders going into our institutions?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Okay. Good question.

**Mr Mills:** Minister, I've noticed that there are some rather obvious changes between the budget for 1993-94 and 1994-95. I just wonder if you could help me with the major areas of significance that we should look to for which there is that variation between those budgets of the two years.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** The most significant changes between fiscal 1994-95 and 1993-94, and I'm talking now estimates to estimates, would be the social contract savings target of \$32 million, which is a reduction in costs of operating the ministry. The cost of the additional OPP officers which this government has approved and was phased in over three years is a \$6.8-million increase.

**Municipal policing contracts:** As you know, a number of communities are deciding that the best way they can provide policing services in their communities is to go with OPP contracts, and we're doing a number of reviews right now and proposals. I believe we have about six or seven that are in this particular budget. That's about \$3.2 million.

**The outgoing cost for the OPP shows up in our budget.** The income that comes in from the municipalities is shown in the consolidated revenue fund. So Floyd gets the money and we get the bill.

**Mr Murphy:** You didn't negotiate that too well.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I think you guys set up the system; you or the Tories.

**Mr Murphy:** That was because of Nixon.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I had to live with what was there.

**First nations policing agreements:** \$2.9 million, similar there. We have also provided grants to municipalities to defray the cost of training and providing firearms simulators across Ontario. That's given us a \$3.1-million change in the budget. We've restated one-time expenditure reductions that were in the 1993-94 estimates for the OPP, such as the vehicle purchase, uniforms and other things. Those have been restated in the 1994-95 budget and show an increase of \$3.2 million.

**Mr Murphy:** I want to follow up on just the Fire Services Review Committee stuff and the productivity committee stuff. The other things we can follow up later.

Minister, in terms of moving ahead with legislation—and you said you were committed to moving that process forward—I'm wondering if I can get a clearer sense of your time frame.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** No, you can't.

**Mr Murphy:** That's honest, anyway.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** It is; it's the truth.

**Mr Murphy:** Sorry; I'm shocked, actually, to get an answer.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Even if it's no? I don't have a detailed, critical path. Obviously, the Liberal SG didn't when he or she set out with this, and, to date, I don't have one.

The difficulty right now is that, again, because it's been, like, 50 years since there's been any significant change to fire services legislation, there's a lot of pent-up frustration around a lot of areas. Also, as you well know, we don't even have a basic requirement in the province of Ontario for a municipality to provide them. Theoretically, a municipality could eliminate its fire service and there's nothing that the Solicitor General can do about it; unlike policing, where we've got it regulated to the teeth, which it should be.

So this has led to a whole array of issues that need to be dealt with, not just a few things, not one or two big ones, but a whole array of issues, and very strong feelings on all sides, from those who want radical change to those who want things to stay exactly the way they are. Now, I'm speculating, but I suspect that my predecessors, Liberal and New Democrat, and probably why the Tories didn't do anything, were really concerned about suggesting to the fire services in Ontario that they were going to jam the legislation down their throats. I think that's why this thing has gone on so long.

1750

I've asked people, and I give a lot of credit to the leadership in the labour movement, the chiefs and municipalities who are prepared to go around, if you will, the table one more time to identify just how much common ground there is. One of the problems is that there was so much time gap between the last report and the last recommendations, and now I found that when I met with people, and I had numerous meetings with the associations, positions had changed. It made it very difficult for me to see clearly what I ought to be recommending.

**Mr Murphy:** It'll change when the new union leader gets elected soon too—

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Sometimes, that's right, and the same with the chiefs. They have their association, although they in this case haven't changed their position. But those sorts of things can happen in AMO and other things.

However, the long and the short of it is that I'm committed to moving this thing as quickly as I can. At some point I recognize that I may not have everybody holding hands and singing from the same hymn-book, singing down the path, and I'm going to have to make some hard and fast decisions. But my goal is to have as few of those as possible and to try to find that consensus that meets the needs of the stakeholders but delivers the legislated service to the public.

**Mr Murphy:** Just to try and pin that down a little bit, and I know you've said you don't have a schedule



particularly in mind—there are two alternatives. Obviously, there's the "Don't do anything," and there's the view, "Well, at least we need the debate, even if we can't get agreement." People are saying, "Will there be an opportunity within the mandate of this administration for comment in a public forum on a draft of some kind following up on the recommendations of the Fire Services Review Committee?"

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** That is my goal. I cannot give you an absolute commitment; I could not do that with the stakeholders simply because I cannot, but I am comfortable saying to you, as I've said to others, that that is my goal. My goal is to have, hopefully, not just a draft document, because we've done that already, but draft legislation that we could circulate either prior to or just after an introduction in the House that would allow all of the stakeholders to take a look at some serious proposals with details.

**Mr Murphy:** Would it be your intention that you do it as a whole package, as opposed to, for example, if you had agreement on 15 out of 20 recommendations, to say, "Let's carve the 15 out and do just the 15 and leave the five for the succeeding mandate," or is it a commitment that it's 20 as part of a whole package?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Good question, a fair question. I'd have to say it would depend on what the pieces are that we've got agreement on and what the pieces that are that we don't. If we could do it that way, if we could parcel it in that way and it furthered the issue of enhancing fire safety in Ontario, then yes, I'd be prepared to look at it. But I'd be foolish to say to you now that I'll just take whatever we agree on and not move with the rest if there isn't a clear rationale for legislation, if those pieces that aren't agreed on don't fit. That's as frank as I can be.

**Mr Murphy:** I wanted to follow up on the deputy's comment regarding the productivity committee and the reference in the municipal sector agreement regarding bringing the labour laws in line. I don't care who answers it. The bottom line is, I'm wondering whether it is the current position of the government that firefighters and police officers will continue to not have the right to strike, or is that changed by virtue of the municipal sector agreement and somehow the government's view is that police and firefighters should have the right to strike?

**Ms Noble:** Maybe I can answer a procedural question, and that is that the actual note in the municipal public sector agreement simply says, "There shall be a review of those issues," so it's not a commitment to one position or another in terms of outcomes. It's simply saying that there shall be an opportunity to discuss the matters, and that's the procedure being looked at.

**Mr Murphy:** To a certain degree I'm being a cipher on this because I'm picking up and people are telling me that this is what they're hearing, that the right to strike will be given perhaps as an unwanted gift to firefighters, for example, in this circumstance. I think what they're waiting to hear is a clear signal from the minister clarify

ing that this is not the case or perhaps is. Here's your opportunity, Minister.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** The most direct answer to you is that there's been no decision made on that issue by cabinet. There's no announcement to be made of a change, nor is there an announcement to be made that there's no change. The deputy has indicated to you we've made commitments to review it. That is part of a number of initiatives that we have agreed to undertake as a result of negotiations with the unions and municipalities and others in the course of the social contract legislation. I have no announcements to make at this time because there are none to be made.

**Mr Murphy:** I'm not sure what you just said. If I were interpreting that, I wouldn't take much comfort. If I were, for example, a firefighter who didn't want to have the right to strike and liked the arbitration or a municipal leader who thought, subject to some changes to the arbitration provisions, that not having firefighters be able to go on strike was a good thing, I wouldn't take much comfort in what you just said. So I want to give you another opportunity to make it clear. Is the policy remaining unchanged that the right to strike is not being given and is not proposed to be given to firefighters, or are you saying it's open and that we'll see what the review produces?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'm saying that no decision has been made. I'm also saying that we'll honour the commitment that we've made in the social contract. I appreciate that this doesn't give great comfort to those who feel one way or the other, but it is the reality.

**Mr Murphy:** That's fine. I just wanted to give you the opportunity to be clear and that I didn't misunderstand.

**Ms Noble:** I think one of the things we might do to assist is we might bring in the actual agreements. The sector agreements are, as I understand it, publicly available. So therefore we could bring in the language in terms of the particular note, because it does speak to the bringing together but it also speaks to specific areas, and they don't include the one you're just raising; they do speak to questions of arbitration.

**Mr Murphy:** Perhaps the minister might want to clarify after he's reviewed the agreement, but I'm telling you what I'm hearing. All I want is the minister to say that I'm wrong or I'm right, and he's telling me, "Could be." So I'll pass that message on unless he wants me to pass on a different one.

**Mr Duignan:** You're going to be a good Liberal.

**The Chair:** I know it's hard for me to tell the difference between the two of you.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'll get back to you with a clearer answer tomorrow.

**The Chair:** It is 6 of the clock. This committee stands adjourned, to meet again following routine proceedings tomorrow, June 1, committee room 2. We have three hours and 40 minutes remaining.

The committee adjourned at 1758.









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### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Mills, Gordon (Durham East/-Est ND) for Mr Lessard

Murphy, Tim (St George-St David L) for Mr Mahoney

Runciman, Robert W. (Leeds-Grenville PC) for Mr Arnott

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** McLellan, Ray, research officer, Legislative Research Service



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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 1 June 1994

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 1 juin 1994



**Standing committee on  
estimates**

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and Correctional Services

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 1 June 1994

Mercredi 1 juin 1994

The committee met at 1547 in committee room 2.

MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL  
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We're assembled today to continue with the estimates of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. We have approximately three hours and 40 minutes remaining.

We have agreed to stack the votes, so we probably won't be voting on anything today. However, there were several questions on which the minister agreed to undertake further investigation, and to the extent that he has some of those responses, I'd devote a bit of time now for him to share that information. Some of it is in print form and some of it is verbal. Then we'll proceed with our regular rotation.

**Hon David Christopherson (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** Thank you, Mr Chairman. When I talked to you before the meeting and said there are things in writing or in print, what I was being advised was that they will be ready for the next meeting but they aren't ready today. In seeking your guidance, you didn't particularly want me to go on at great length in giving verbal responses. I have a couple of issues I would like to comment on verbally.

We do have some material around the issues of the education questions, which will be here shortly, I'm told.

Also, I have quite a number of senior staff from areas where there were questions where the members of the committee may want to ask details beyond what I'm expected to have. I would mention for the information of members to consider that we have Dr Jim Young, who is the chief coroner of Ontario and is also the acting assistant deputy minister of our public safety division. Ontario Fire Marshal Bernie Moyle is also with us today. We have Dr Terry Angle for special education.

We did try to reach Dr Schabas, as requested by the committee, but unfortunately he's not available today. Again, not being a part of my ministry, I can't give a commitment, but we have Dr Paul Humphries, the senior medical officer for the ministry, who would certainly be prepared to come forward and assist in dialoguing with any issues members might have.

Jim Ellard from Emergency Measures Ontario is also here, in addition to, obviously, financial folks and others. I would point out that Dr Young is also prepared to answer questions regarding the forensic centre, as well as forensic science questions, as he works very closely with those individuals and can provide a lot of assistance.

I want to formally acknowledge my appreciation to Tim Murphy for his generous offer to ensure that what he was hearing was something that I'd be as comfortable with today and tomorrow as I was the first time I said it. I do appreciate that very much. I think that's a very honourable gesture and I won't forget it.

To clarify the matter very clearly, there is no consideration at this point on the part of the government to change that. What is under way is a look at whether or not any changes to aspects of arbitrations would be helpful in making the process more efficient, but the answer to your question is no.

Just a couple of other matters, Mr Chairman, and I'll turn it over to you to start the questions.

There was a question, and I'm not sure who asked it, regarding what assistance the ministry has provided with regard to the transition to new standard issue handguns—that was Tim also—moving from the .38 calibre to the 9 millimetre or .40 calibre, as in the new regulation.

As much as I would have liked to be able through our ministry to provide financial assistance, we were not able to do that. What we did was to ensure that the transition time was as long as we could reasonably make it in terms of our desire to see the change happen quickly; also as long as we could, recognizing the need to meet Ministry of Labour concerns about the safety issues.

The reason for the length of time would be to make it easier for police services to plan the costings over a number of budget years and to phase in the changes. The regulation provides for a five-year transition period. The vast majority of the police services will be done within two or three years at the maximum. Only the very large services will be longer than that, and even with those, I'm making it a priority to do the training and the transition.

The OPP, as they always do, are offering whatever assistance they can in terms of training to smaller police services across the province. I know that, as much as possible, different police services are working together to share the load of the training costs. That's where we stand with that.

I would also point out, of course, that all the new recruits at the Ontario Police College will be trained on the new semi-automatic pistol and they will be assured of being trained at the standard in terms of number of rounds and number of hours. That full cost is picked up by the ministry, as we run the Ontario Police College.

The issue of disposal and storage of the .38 calibre: There has been a letter go out from my policing services

division advising police services that it is the desire of the ministry that there not be any resales, that there not be any trade-ins, that there not be any selling even offshore into other jurisdictions, that it is our desire that the weapons be destroyed and eliminated.

I want to say to committee members, though, that at this point that letter in and of itself cannot constitute, to use simple language, a direct order. I offer up that it may be difficult with existing regulations to enforce that if there were a police service that decided it didn't want to follow this. But in monitoring this issue, in most of the areas where anybody has any other ideas, there has been a lot of public reaction: editorials, letters, community activists who have stepped forward and said this is unacceptable.

At this point I think the leadership we've provided is going to give us what we need. I continue to monitor it closely and I'm going to say here, for the first time, that I don't rule out, if we have a serious problem seeing that followed, looking at other action necessary to be able to enforce it.

**The Chair:** Minister, I suggest that we're getting into a more narrative response to some of these questions. The norm is to treat the matters more or less in a fashion of an order paper question, which is generally helpful to the members, and somewhat easier for staff actually. If those are tabled, we find that system works best.

But since we only have three hours and a bit remaining and the members have all served notice of a series of additional questions they want to raise and we have deputants here, I wonder if we could perhaps either circulate any of that information or rely on your suggestion earlier that you'll have some of that in writing.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Fair enough.

**The Chair:** I'd appreciate that.

I suggest 20-minute segments, if that's agreeable to everyone. Mr Runciman is up first.

**Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I have a couple of things. I raised an issue in the House the other day which the minister became quite agitated about, but I think it's worth resurrecting. I gather that one of the major Toronto newspapers will be doing a significant story on this issue in the next couple of days.

**Mr Derek Fletcher (Guelph):** The Toronto Sun?

**Mr Runciman:** It's not the Toronto Sun. It's in respect to the operation of the Elizabeth Fry facility in Hamilton. I understand as well that a report has been handed over to the major crime unit of Hamilton-Wentworth and they are going to be deciding at some point this week whether to get involved in a full investigation in respect to the allegations surrounding that. I don't pretend to be privy to all of the information; we simply had some materials made available to us. I would ask the minister in respect to this issue if he has any concerns about the allegations of the operations.

I know he indicated in the House that he felt the report had to be circulated to the funding organizations. We were advised after question period that the report had been sent to the other funders and had been sent back because they felt there was inadequate information in the

report. It had been so severely edited that it was of little or no value to the funders in terms of reaching some sorts of conclusions.

I felt that I made a valid point in question period in respect to the fact that if there were concerns coming from that report that merited police involvement, the minister had a responsibility to immediately involve the police and to conduct an investigation; as well as administrative matters, that he should be acting on them quickly without having to seek the endorsement of other funders, especially in his role, as I described him, as the top cop in the province.

Again, I simply would like to ask him about that issue. He has had some time to talk to his staff about the matter. Is he still comfortable with the position he took in the House, or is anything further happening in respect to that matter?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'm very, very pleased, quite frankly, to have the opportunity to have a better dialogue with you on this, rather than just the atmosphere of question period. In terms of your valid points, they probably, if there were any, would have had a better chance of being addressed by me had they not been wrapped up in some of the other, let's just say, material that I characterized in the House, which I had to withdraw.

**Mr Runciman:** That's not what you're doing now, I gather.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** No, of course not.

First of all, let's understand the process, because I think—I know—there are some inaccuracies in your understanding of what is happening. The process for the review was initiated by all of the funders in response to concerns that had surfaced in the community.

The funders agreed to terms of reference that had a representative from our investigations unit—although I don't think that's the right word; but anyway an investigative unit within our ministry—and someone from Corrections Canada. Both those individuals undertook to prepare a report based on the terms of reference that were approved by the funding groups, and we were one of them. We are one of the funders; we're not the only funder. Another part of the ministry, unrelated, was responsible for doing the investigative part that we were doing, then someone from Corrections Canada was playing the same role and they were working together. They were doing a joint review, joint investigation, if you will.

**1600**

When they completed their initial draft report, they sent it to freedom of information people to look at it for the obvious purpose of ensuring that there weren't things in there, in the course of an investigation, that shouldn't be said because they might violate people's rights under freedom of information.

That document was then returned to the authors, the authors signed the report and submitted it to the funding group. The funding group felt that they didn't have all of the answers they were hoping to get, so the authors of the report agreed to meet with the funding group. That took place.



Yesterday there was a meeting of the funders again, having met with the authors, and it's my understanding that they agreed at that meeting they were going to present the report to the board and that, in doing so, they asked the board to receive the report, prepare their response and meet with the funders again. The board, of course, is a community board; it's a community organization. Each of us as funders, most of them anyway, it's through service contracts, but the board runs the facilities, not the ministry and not any of the other major funders.

So where do things stand right now? The board, the proper authority constituted to run the facility, has received the report that the funding group mandated and requested. They've been asked by the funders to review the report and to meet again with the funders with their response, if you will, and I guess their plan of action, and that's where we stand today.

**Mr Runciman:** I guess the question I asked you in respect to your role as Solicitor General was if there were allegations or evidence that were part of this report. In terms of allegations respecting criminality where the police should have been called in, you didn't acknowledge whether or not there were those sorts of allegations incorporated in the report that you received.

If indeed there were, and apparently, from the information I've received, a police officer in the Hamilton-Wentworth area felt strongly enough in that respect and submitted a report to the major crime unit—they have to make the final decision in that respect, but I thought those kinds of allegations were there. I'm sort of curious about how you see your own responsibility in those kinds of matters, and if those allegations were there, and I suspect they were, why you didn't feel it was appropriate to act upon them.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** First of all—and I know you know processes within my ministry and policing circles probably better than most people, certainly in the Legislature—you well know that I don't call in the police myself. I don't initiate investigations myself. That is done by officials, and so it wouldn't be appropriate for me in any case to be phoning the police and say, "I want you to start investigating such-and-such." For obvious reasons, that's not the way it works.

However, I am advised that the investigators, during their course of reviewing this whole matter, had what is being termed the appropriate contact with policing services as they went through their investigations. If you need to know what that was, you'll need to ask them.

I should tell you that the head of the unit within the ministry from which our co-author was drawn is an inspector-ranked OPP officer. So the first thing: If there is something there that immediately should be brought to the attention of the police by virtue of information uncovered as a result of this investigation, then appropriate contact was being made with the police at that time, as it should be.

Second, the product itself, the report, is not my report. The report doesn't come to me. It wasn't initiated by me alone. Many reports are, and many of them I answer to the House for. This one belongs to the funding group.

**Mr Runciman:** I know you're sensitive to this line of questioning and I respect your concerns, but the allegation was made and I think it merits follow-up in respect to the involvement, if indeed there was any—the allegation was made—of your chief of staff in respect to her past employment history with Elizabeth Fry and her friendship, I gather, with people who are at the centre of this investigation.

Question period is a difficult time to get a full explanation as well as an appropriate question, but I gather what you have indicated is contrary to what people are telling me, that when they tried to contact your office with respect to their concerns over this report, they experienced difficulty and in fact those calls were funnelled to your chief of staff's office.

Whether she was involved in any of these calls directly or not I have no knowledge, but I guess I'd just like to give you the opportunity to elaborate on that a little bit more, your assurances that she in no way, shape or form has had any involvement in this matter from day one.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the tenor and I'll respond in kind. No. I went to great lengths to be very sure that there was no direct involvement and that as a result of taking strong action not to be involved there wouldn't be the perception. The only step I could have gone further would be to relieve her of duties and fire her or transfer her out of the office, which I don't think is a practical expectation. But certainly a reasonable move on my part would be to ask her to have no involvement at all in this case and in this file. That's what I've done, and that is the way she has conducted herself.

**Mr Runciman:** Has that been from the outset?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** That's from the outset, and let me say that I checked on the issue of the phone calls. I didn't address it in the House because I didn't have a specific response and, rather than just throw up the wall, I followed up. Apparently any calls that came in—I don't know what phone number they were given and whether that ended up being her office, but all the calls were taken by other staff. There was no direct engagement by my chief of staff with anyone certainly that I'm aware of. Again, I express my confidence that I'd be very surprised to learn anything to the contrary.

**Mr Runciman:** Okay. I'll move on to another subject now. The chief coroner may want to come forward for this. It's a question related to a Lindsay area coroner, a fellow by the name of Al Lackey. I don't know if you're familiar with the gentleman. This has to do with an individual by the name of Roch Theriault—there have been a number of articles written about him and there's a book, *The Savage Messiah*—who had a cult, a commune, in the Lindsay area.

The book *The Savage Messiah*, which was written by two reporters from Maclean's magazine, documents that Mr Lackey, while he was this area coroner, was also acting effectively as the family doctor to the commune and was a close friend of Mr Theriault's. They make some strong allegations in respect to why that relationship was there. I'm not going to get into why that relationship existed. It's in the book. It's there for anyone to read.

In 1985, Lackey declared that a two-month-old baby on the commune, who'd been left in a wheelbarrow in 10-degree temperature, had died of SIDS. I'm not sure what that stands for.

**The Chair:** Sudden infant death syndrome.

**Mr Runciman:** Sudden infant death syndrome, right. Last year, according to the authors, the chief coroner's office was re-examining the file, but the results were never announced and when the authors tried to contact Dr Lackey he was extremely hostile. I'm posing the question as to what happened to that file and whether Dr Lackey is continuing to serve as the coroner in the Lindsay area.

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**Dr James Young:** I'm Dr James Young. I'm the chief coroner for the province of Ontario and I'm also the acting assistant deputy minister for public safety.

**Mr Tim Murphy (St George-St David):** That's two business cards.

**Mr Runciman:** How long have you been chief coroner?

**Dr Young:** Four years, since 1990. I'm certainly more than aware of the case and I'm aware that Dr Lackey had some involvement in the case and that there was a book written. I have not read the book and I was unaware till this moment of that allegation within the book, so I'm unable to comment in any way on whether or not he was a friend or a family doctor or what his involvement with Mr Theriault was. I can comment that he is a coroner in that area of the province and remains so, and I can confirm that the investigation was reopened and reconsidered as to whether or not there is evidence of foul play.

The classification for sudden infant death syndrome has changed in the province over the period of time since that was done and this death would, under today's classification, not be considered sudden infant death. It would more likely be called SUDS, or sudden unexplained death, because all features of the case are not in order and cannot be easily explained. The last I heard was that we had reclassified the death but we didn't have any information that would allow the case to proceed any further than that.

**Mr Runciman:** Reclassified it to what?

**Dr Young:** To SUDS from SIDS.

**Mr Runciman:** There was no concern in respect to the investigation related to Dr Lackey's performance, or perhaps a conflict or a suggested conflict by the authors of this book in respect to his relationship with Mr Theriault?

**Dr Young:** I was unaware of this allegation until you raised it here, so there hasn't been an investigation because I didn't know there was anything to investigate. I certainly can look into the matter, but I had never heard that allegation till this moment.

**Mr Runciman:** When you redefine the cause of death from SIDS to SUDS, are the police called in those kinds of circumstances, if you're saying it's a sudden unexplained death? If the coroner makes a finding initially that this was sudden infant death syndrome, the police, I assume, are not called in to conduct an investigation.

**Dr Young:** Yes, they are. In any baby's death, one can only arrive at sudden infant death syndrome after an extensive investigation. The investigation would include an autopsy, a scene investigation, interviews with those involved. At the point in time when the death is of a child under one year of age and all factors in the investigation, including the autopsy in the investigation, are negative, then it can be classified as SIDS, but only after that.

Under the current definition, if there are any factors that would lead to suspicion or concern that it would be considered either a sudden unexplained or, in some instances, a homicide if in fact there was a proven shaken baby or injuries that would result in death—but the police are always involved as part of that process as the coroner's investigators.

**Mr Runciman:** So when you reached a different conclusion than the coroner had originally, are the police notified of that change? It's up to the police in the area, I assume, whether they initiate another investigation of the circumstances.

**Dr Young:** That's right. They would be aware of the change in classification and that the death should be relooked at. It's still very difficult, though, from a sudden unexplained death, to draw conclusions of a criminal nature that are easily supported in court.

**The Chair:** I'd like to suggest at this point that in the interests of the scheduling of our deputants, if there are questions for the chief coroner, we try and deal with them today and then we don't have to call Dr Young to come back next week. If you can keep that in mind, we won't be bound by it, but at the end of the day I will ask which of the deputants you don't wish to have back, in the interests of letting them continue.

Having said that, I recognize Mr Fletcher.

**Mr Fletcher:** No, mine has to deal with corrections, so I don't need the chief coroner.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr Young.

**Mr Fletcher:** It's okay. Mr Hayes can go first, as long as he leaves me the time, or Mr Mills, whoever it is who wants to.

**The Chair:** No, Dr Young can come back. He's not leaving the room. Please proceed with your questions.

**Mr Fletcher:** Thank you for being here, Minister. As you know, I have the Guelph Correctional Centre in my riding, and the Wellington Detention Centre. I've been in contact with many of the people who work in corrections at Guelph and I'm hearing some disturbing facts from the people who are working there. They're union people, they're non-union people. Some of them are management people, some of them are not.

What they're saying to me is that understaffing is creating a morale problem that is starting to be manifested in the way that inmates are being treated, and the morale problem is created because of—it could be tied to the social contract—the issue of overtime, where guards or people who work there have time in lieu of overtime, whereas management personnel are being paid for overtime.

Their concern is that they're not being offered the



opportunity to say no; they're being told they have to work the overtime. They're in excess of 60 hours per week and with the accumulation of the amount of time, there's no way the time in lieu is ever going to be returned to them.

They also say that they see themselves as an essential service, and I tend to agree with them in that aspect, and that they should in that sense either be exempt from or have changes to the social contract which would allow them to maintain that essential service.

I understand also from talking with the employees that they have withdrawn services as far as committees are concerned, employee-management committees, and that as far as recreational activities for the inmates, as far as some of the social things are concerned, they just don't have enough staff. The inmates are not getting out of their dorms or wherever as much as possible, especially in this weather, out of doors as much, and that creates a problem also.

Have you heard these things? Can you comment on these issues?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Certainly I'm aware of some of the concerns that exist at Guelph. I'd like to comment on one or two things and ask the deputy to provide a little bit of detailed backdrop, then I'll come back to answering details with you.

I want to address the issue of the essential service, as it's commonly known. Decisions around whether or not there would be essential services were discussed at the central bargaining table, which of course has representatives of the union and management corporately to talk about the common elements of the social contract.

The determination there was that there was no need to move to a "critical function" designation, which is what it's formally called; that there was no need to move to that in any area of the government at this point because it was felt that through the different tables and discussions and sectoral agreements there would be a way to manage it.

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I must say that so far, although we've had certainly some issues arise in some locations, by and large, as difficult as it's been for management and staff, we have been able to work our way through in a way that allows us to not go to the "critical function" designation. But I would again say that were that to happen, it would be a decision that would be discussed at the corporate level and not just at my ministry level for a decision by me or an official of my ministry.

Michele, perhaps some more specifics on Guelph.

**Ms Michele Noble:** I think a couple of the other points you were raising had to do with overtime and the withdrawal of overtime by some of the correctional officers at Guelph and what impact that was having. We are obviously aware that some of the correctional officers have indicated an unwillingness to take on overtime; however, there are some who are continuing to be available for overtime. We are monitoring the situation, obviously, and at the moment we're not seeing that we haven't been able to accommodate the staffing require-

ments down there. We're very much aware of the concerns of the correctional officers at that institution and are continuing to try and work on the issue as a local issue.

To our knowledge, at the moment the withdrawal of being available for overtime is limited to some of the staff at Guelph.

**Mr Fletcher:** From what I understand, many of the people who are working overtime are either the part-time people or the casuals, and they are being told they have to work overtime. It's not, "Will you work?" It's, "You have to work."

**Ms Noble:** The ministry does have, as part of its agreements with the bargaining agent, agreements around minimum staffing levels for health and safety reasons, and I am aware that there has been a limited number of circumstances in which staff have been required to extend shifts in order that we could make sure that level was maintained. However, in the vast majority of cases, overtime has been provided by volunteers.

**Mr Fletcher:** Are we looking at an amount of overtime that is what I would call obscene if it's all the time? Does that mean the Guelph Correctional Centre is understaffed, because they require so much overtime?

**Ms Noble:** We go through patterns, obviously, in terms of the exact staffing available, in the sense that we have people who leave and unclassified people who are available and then they're not available. We have recently been making sure that we have additional staff available to impact on the numbers of hours that would be needed by individual correctional officers down there. We have a fluctuating staffing pattern, not as approved, but just in terms of who's there, and there have been periods where we've needed to bring on new staff, and that has contributed to substantial hours during those periods. But I think that's something that even out, and we're making sure we have the staffing available.

**Mr Fletcher:** So there is no shortage of personnel at the Guelph Correctional Centre which would make overtime such a necessary evil?

**Ms Noble:** From the ministry's point of view, there is always discussion under way in terms of what minimum staffing levels are. We have agreements with the bargaining agent in terms of what requirements are at any point in time in terms of shifts, and we were managing the institution in a way to ensure that we have the staffing we think we'll need there.

**Mr Fletcher:** Thank you. I could go on, but in view of the time, I'll pass.

**Mr Gordon Mills (Durham East):** Mr Chair, I'm ever mindful of your direction, so I would like to ask a question of the chief coroner, Dr Young. Doctor, if you're asked to come back two or three times, it's a get-it program—no, it isn't; not really.

I haven't got the figures with me here today—I've hunted for them, but like everything else, I've got so many papers it's a job to find it—but I distinctly remember reading that the number of inquests you are doing now is smaller than in the previous report I saw, but it didn't seem to me that the dollar value was less. Could you give me some sort of explanation of what seemingly



looks to be less work for the same money? I don't mean that personally.

**Dr Young:** In fact, there is no figure broken out for the actual cost of inquests, but by design, the number of inquests has dropped considerably in the province over the last number of years. At one time, approximately 10 years ago, we were doing 500 inquests a year. The average length of those inquests was probably about two or three days. We decided that in many instances we were covering the same ground over and over again and that to be effective we should find cases that were representative and go into those cases in more depth.

So we designed a mechanism where we would do just that, and we undertook issues of much greater complexity, such as we did in Yeo and Stephenson and, most recently, in the Kerr inquests. These take a great deal of preparation and time and last for a long time. As well, just the average inquest has increased in complexity because of the number of lawyers attending, and the complexity of running that hearing has increased dramatically. The average inquest now lasts approximately a week in total length, but we believe we get better value for money by doing a topic in some considerable depth.

The number last year was abnormally low, for a number of reasons. We had a number of cases that had to be put over because of their mandatory nature and because there were other considerations, such as criminal charges and labour charges. In some instances, those are waiting and will come on stream this year. We had one courtroom tied up in Toronto with the Donaldson inquest most of the year, so that's created somewhat of a backlog as well.

We've developed a mechanism called a regional coroner's review where, without an inquest, we can hold meetings and then result in recommendations. Many of the changes we used to make through an inquest we in fact do with the consent of all parties and the cooperation of the family.

So it's really a different process than it used to be. It's much more involved, but we think it produces the same result with fewer inquests.

**Mr Mills:** In my past life, I've dealt with the Centre of Forensic Sciences. The Canada letter, for instance, is a famous document where we determined—well, I don't have to tell you; you know. But we would send that down and it would be delayed, delayed, delayed. I just wonder if you could enlighten me as to how you prioritize material that comes forward to your forensic sciences department. Obviously, if there's a serious murder or something like that, it would go to the top of the list, but I'm just wondering about the more mundane things. How do you determine who gets quick service?

**Dr Young:** As the material enters the centre, there is a priority system set up. It really is based on the experience of the centre in regard to how the information will be used. Everything that's submitted is considered to be serious. The problem is that if you make everything of equal seriousness, in fact nothing becomes a priority.

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The system is set up so that the needs for a criminal

court, for example, would take priority and those cases would rise to the top. If, for example, an investigator or a coroner's investigation requires some information, because we may make major investigative decisions based on that particular information, with simply a phone call and an explanation to the scientist at the centre we can reorder the priority and get the result we need.

We try to be mindful of other needs, such as families and insurance needs, civil needs, but these have to be ordered into the mix. As well as that, what can upset the mix considerably is if we have a particularly long and involved case. That may take the majority of the resources in a particular area for a period of time.

Similarly, what we find when we test changes things. If one does a drug screen and the drug screen is negative, we'll get the result back in a matter of a few days. If we do the drug screen and it turns out to be positive and then we have to isolate each of the drugs out and their levels, we're talking about many, many days of work and a report that's probably a month later. All of these factor in and are considered.

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** Dr Young, I'm interested in the education programs within the ministry's facilities. In the correspondence we have here you're talking about encouraging offenders to continue with their education upon release. That's of prime importance. After some of these people are rehabilitated and sent back into the community, especially the young offenders, are they enrolled in regular classes? Is there a follow-up, and what would the success rate be?

**The Chair:** Mr Hayes, I believe there is another member of that ministry who would be anxious to pursue that. Would you like to pursue that question or did you have another question?

**Mr Hayes:** I would like to pursue this.

**The Chair:** Come on down. Please introduce yourself. You were present to hear the question.

**Dr Terry Angle:** My name is Dr Terry Angle and I'm the acting chief education officer for the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. I've been in the role since March 1 of this year. You will have to repeat the question; I just got part of it.

**Mr Hayes:** The question deals with the education programs where you have the agreements between the school boards and Correctional Services. I'm talking about young offenders being encouraged to go back into the school system and continue their education. I just want to know if there is a follow-up on that and how successful it is.

**Dr Angle:** Maybe I could provide some general background information about our educational activities with the young offender clients. We have educational activities in all of our closed-custody sites in and around the province, and all of those programs are provided by local school boards through section 27 agreements. I don't know if you're familiar with that.

**Mr Hayes:** I am now. I have it in front of me.

**Dr Angle:** Yes, it would be in some of the material we presented earlier. The extent of programming, the range of services, will vary from site to site, but certainly

all the young offenders will have an educational opportunity wherever they happen to be in our closed-custody facilities and in most of our open-custody ones as well. They would be provided by local boards. If they were a resident pupil of the local board and would be returning to that community where the board is providing service, they'd be able to be linked to a local school board program in the area. If they're a non-resident pupil, it becomes a little more difficult for the boards to do the linkages, but they attempt to do that.

**Mr Murphy:** Minister, to follow up on some of your opening comments, just so I'm clear, you indicated there was no consideration on the part of government to change the current right-to-strike rules as part of the social contract. You're nodding yes.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** As I understand it, yes, that's where we are. You need to appreciate, of course, that the discussions of the social contract and its implications are done, as I said earlier, at the corporate level, so I don't profess for a moment to be an expert in every nuance of the social contract. However, I'm prepared to give you detailed responses in writing, should you request them, if I don't give you enough through verbal responses.

**Mr Murphy:** You indicated that in fact that provision in the municipal sector agreement was related to arbitration provisions. That same issue is being discussed by the Fire Services Review Committee as part of that process. To what extent, then, is this municipal sector agreement and the follow-up through the productivity gang independent of the fire services review, or is it the same thing? What's the input of your ministry?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Do you want to give a process answer, Michele?

**Ms Noble:** It's that issue that I had attempted to address yesterday in indicating that there's actually no discussion taking place currently that has flowed from the social contract document. There's no table where people are sitting and having that discussion. Because the sector agreement indicates that there shall be a review of the items by August, there has been preliminary discussion at the officials' level, in terms of what needs to be discussed, of what special circumstances need to be created to deal with it, as opposed to those things which are already under discussion, and that has not been concluded. So at the moment, our position is that these issues are part of the discussion of the fire services review and that has not been sorted out or finalized.

There's nothing taking place at the moment which is separate. I think the intention is not to duplicate and confuse.

**Mr Murphy:** Some of the fire chiefs came in and saw me on this issue, and their concern was that there not be two trains running along two separate tracks.

**Ms Noble:** And that's exactly our concern.

**Mr Murphy:** All right. I also want to follow up on a couple of other things, and I'll bounce around a bit again.

Ages ago, Minister, you had a couple of polls done by Westmount Research and I don't think those have been tabled. I'm wondering if I could get them, and if not,

why not? I'm referring to two; one I don't have a date for, but I think it's 1992 for both of them.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Sorry, what are they, Tim?

**Mr Murphy:** In 1992, there's Police Issues, by Westmount Research. That's all I have, and I have amounts of \$3,500 for one and \$31,000 for the other—polling.

**Ms Noble:** We'll have to check.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'm not sure I was the minister at the time, but I'll get you answers.

**Mr Murphy:** But you have a corporate uniformity.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes. I'm not saying you're not entitled to an answer from me; I'm just saying that since I may not have been there when the decision and action were taken, and Michele came to the ministry at the same time as I did, I need to find out.

**Mr Murphy:** My information is that they're not tabled.

**Ms Noble:** Could you just give us the titles again?

**Mr Murphy:** All I have is "Police Issues" for both of them. I assume that was around your testing the public's reaction to use-of-force regulations.

**Ms Noble:** They were undertaken by the ministry?

**Mr Murphy:** Yes.

I wanted to follow up on an issue that I think has been raised in the House, some concern raised by people at the Lindsay Jail, and I believe it's some guards there, the correctional officers. They have made the allegation that because of overcrowding there is a tendency to release inmates earlier than should be the case into the community. I would like to get a sense of what the numbers are of releases, whether the length of stay in that jail is disproportionately lower than in other equivalent institutions and whether there has been some kind of change—because I know there is some discretionary power in the individual jail authorities—in terms of the pattern of releasing people within recent years in order to resolve the overcrowding issue.

1640

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** In terms of statistical information, I'll ask Michele what she can give you in terms of what she may or may not have in front of her. But let me say this much about probably the more critical point in all of this, that is, the standard by which superintendents or their designates exercise the discretionary authority that is given to them.

No one, without exception, is to be considered for any kind of community release unless they qualify based on the criteria that are now set out in the ministry. There is not the ability to have checklist A in most circumstances but that if you're tight in terms of beds you can slip over to checklist B and it's not quite as onerous. That's not the way the system works. There's one set of requirements, and certainly one of the largest factors is the element of safety for the community, and none of that is lessened in any way as a result of any circumstances when a superintendent is to be exercising that authority. Having said that, if Michele has any info—

**Ms Noble:** Unfortunately, I don't have the detailed stats.



**Mr Murphy:** If you can have someone follow up, that would be wonderful. Related to that, I know you actually have an inmate suing you out of that jail.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** You know how many people sue the government on any given day?

**Mr Murphy:** You get tons, I know. It probably has increased in the last little while too.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** No, no, no. They're resolved quicker now.

**Mr Murphy:** What is the status of that lawsuit?

**Ms Noble:** Actually, it's interesting. There is a letter which I have received from a lawyer giving an indication of the concerns of the inmate. The letter itself does not constitute legal notice, and at the moment we're not aware that there is in fact a formal suit launched.

**Mr Murphy:** Do you know how many inmates sue you in a given year?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I don't, but then I'm not hands-on involved.

**Mr Murphy:** I'll just go through the questions. The second related question is, what percentage of those inmates who sue you, who actually take that step of engaging a lawyer, do so on legal aid?

**The Chair:** Is there someone from legal services in your ministry with us today?

**Ms Noble:** No, there's no one here.

**The Chair:** Is there a lawyer in the crowd?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Other than the person asking the question?

**Mr Murphy:** Who's willing to identify themselves as such, you mean?

**Ms Noble:** What we can do is note the questions and come back.

**Mr Murphy:** You may not be able to know what percentage of your inmates receive legal aid.

**Ms Noble:** We would not have that information. All we would know from our records—I presume we would be able to glean the number of suits which were from inmates—assuming the suits were identified, that there was something that would identify them in that.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Even if someone self-identified at some point in the process that they were receiving legal aid assistance, we still wouldn't keep track of it because it's not relevant to our responding.

**Ms Noble:** It's not relevant to us.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** No, we wouldn't have that. I wouldn't want to leave the impression that we can come back with that.

**Mr Murphy:** I asked you yesterday about your response, and I don't think you got around to it because of time, on the systemic racism report and the correctional managers' response to it. I'm concerned about methodology. On a related issue, I think a little over a year ago now the ministry internally conducted a series of anti-racism focus groups at the same time, essentially, as the Commission on Systemic Racism was happening. If outside consultants were engaged to do it, I would like to know what they were paid. If it was internal, to the

degree you can have that, how much did it cost, and what was the logic of doing that internally at the same time you were having a significant external study being done?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** We have all of that and it should be here in the room, either with Michele or Kirk or somebody.

**Ms Noble:** I'm not sure whether we have the actual dollar cost of the focus group. There were external consultants and we can obtain that information.

**The Chair:** Can somebody help out the minister or the deputy?

**Mr Murphy:** This could be a chance for career advancement.

**Ms Noble:** No, no. Someone's just gone to make a phone call, I think, in terms of that information.

From the point of view of why it was done, the Commission on Systemic Racism was focusing in with respect to the offenders in the ministry. One of the concerns we had at the time was that there were issues and concerns among our staff about some of the issues and we wanted to have some ability to get their perceptions but also to start to engage them in the issues and the identification of things that would need to be changed if we were going to deal with the issue of systemic racism.

I think part of the logic was knowing that the commission was doing its work. It hadn't been preceded by the concerns expressed by Mr Lewis. There was a feeling that we couldn't simply sit and wait: "Well there may or may not be a problem." It was recognition that there were some staff concerns and we needed to start to engage it. Actually, I've just been handed a note. The consultant cost was \$35,000.

**Mr Murphy:** Minister, I want to ask you a question arising out of a recommendation under the systemic racism review and then the response from the correctional managers. The divergence in views couldn't be clearer, and I'm wondering what your response is.

The systemic racism report recommends the abolition of the racial segregation of prisoners. Its recommendation is that prisoners be randomly distributed to facilities in ranges within institutions. The correctional managers say no, that the decision should be based, first and foremost, on the safety and security needs of inmates, staff and stability of the institution. There should be no systemwide random distribution directive.

In the specific case, have you taken a position on that dispute yet? If you are still in the course of responding to these, what is it? And when can we expect to see an official response?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Again I would seek staff to respond in terms of the specifics, but let me say that on the policy question, which is my jurisdiction alone, if you will, I have accepted the recommendation that we need to find ways of ensuring that we do not have any kind of systemic segregation and that we do need to find a system that will allow us to achieve that goal, recognizing that there always needs to be the ability to deal with certain circumstances, in terms of safety and special circumstances that do arise. But we're looking at a



system that suggests—and now I'm just giving you the thinking as opposed to the detailed policy—that where those kinds of decisions may be made or allowed, they would be reported in through the system and reviewed, so they're constantly monitored to ensure that we aren't slipping into just a new form of segregation.

So that's the policy decision. The policy decision is, yes, we accept the recommendation; yes, we're going to put in place methods that will allow us to achieve those goals. Now, in terms of where we are in that process and how we might be doing that, I would ask staff to maybe respond in a little more detail.

**Ms Noble:** In terms of the point that seems to be juxtaposed, which is security versus segregation, and that you achieve a lack of segregation through random assignment, obviously, as a corrections group we have to be concerned about safety and security issues.

I think what the report and the commission was identifying is that there may be practices which are inadvertently leading to unnecessary segregation. From the ministry's point of view, we would certainly say that one needs to deal with safety and security as a primary concern. If there are instances where it's just practice or happenstance—in other words, it is not a security issue—then we need to look at the question of segregation.

One of the recommendations in the report specifically spoke to the training of the staff involved in the classification of the inmates when they come into the system, their training in terms of identification as one way of dealing with this issue, because they are the people who are supposed to be identifying where within the facility, taking these issues into account.

So we are taking action in terms of the development of specific training in those areas, but I would not say we're about to adopt a totally random placement system that does not take into account a security concern.

1650

**Mr Murphy:** I'm going to follow up on another review which has implications probably more for Correctional Services than Solicitor General. I think the fellow's name is Dick Barnhorst, who is in the AG's department, who was doing a justice policy review project. I gather it was finished last fall, and I'm wondering whether those aspects of it that had Correctional Services impacts have come to you for response. Have you seen it, have you responded to it, or do you know about it?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Well, I know about it, but I'm not sure exactly what the current status is. Michele?

**Ms Noble:** The justice review policy paper had been worked on, actually, on a multiministry basis, so both ministries had been involved in the development of the document and the policy draft. At the moment it has not yet received cabinet endorsement as a document, so we're not in the position of implementing in that sense. But certainly the ministry has been involved, was involved, in the development of the document.

**Mr Murphy:** Is it available, Minister?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I don't imagine it is, since it's still a working document at the staff level. I don't believe it's an actual position paper or policy paper until

cabinet has had a chance to discuss it, so I doubt very much at this point, but I'll certainly be glad to check.

**Mr Murphy:** Thank you.

I'm going to ask the chief coroner one question while he's still here. That relates to the statistics on page 19 of the estimates briefing book, which showed about an 800 investigation drop in terms of the number of cases completed at the Centre of Forensic Sciences from 1992-93 to 1993-94, while at the same time there is a reported drop in the turnaround per case. The ministry yesterday said part of the explanation for the drop of that was a replacement of more experienced staff by junior staff, which would result in training and longer investigations. I'm confused by the fact that this reports a drop in the turnaround time, and yet you have 800 fewer cases. I'm wondering if you could help me understand.

**Dr Young:** It is a complicated area. I think one of the keys is to look at the actual backlogs, Mr Murphy. The backlogs at the Centre of Forensic Sciences have dropped slightly over time, which would suggest to me that in fact it's a decreased number of submissions to the centre that's resulting in fewer reports out the other end.

**Mr Murphy:** Is it because of the backlog that you're getting fewer submissions?

**Dr Young:** No. The reason for the drop in the submissions is that there's been a concerted effort on the part of the centre and the office of the chief coroner, along with police and crown attorneys, to have discussions about what submissions are necessary, what submissions aren't necessary, how to maintain evidence and not make a submission but ensure that the material has been preserved in case there needs to be a submission later. So we've managed at the lower end, in the marginal cases, to eliminate a great number of those, and therefore the number of reports coming back out is decreased.

The other thing to bear in mind is that, while this is happening, this is a raw number that doesn't actually reflect the complexity of the cases. You can have fewer cases and greater complexity, and that in fact is what's happening the more we use DNA and other things.

**Mr Murphy:** We're not given a very long historical summary, so it's tough to tell how much of an aberration it is. What is the backlog now?

**Dr Young:** I saw a figure earlier today. I believe it's around 2,000 cases.

**Interjection:** Thirteen hundred.

**Dr Young:** Thirteen hundred cases, Mr Murphy.

**Mr Murphy:** I forget the mathematical term, but do you know what percentage of those are 60 days old, 90 days old, aging—accounts receivable aging in another environment, but that's not what you call them in this.

**Dr Young:** I don't have those actual figures today. I would say, though, that that type of issue is very complicated because it deals with the complexities of the cases in many instances. A 60-day-old file may be totally appropriate because of the amount of science that has to be done to it, but I don't have the actual run-out on how long each of them is. The average turnaround is approximately 60 days. That figure I do have.

**Mr Murphy:** I don't want to create a significant amount of new work for the centre, but if I could get that backlog aging figure, and it's okay if that's just on a piece of paper, I don't need you to come back to tell me. Thank you.

**Mr Runciman:** I have a couple of question for Dr Young. I'd like to wait a minute or two on that, but he doesn't have to leave that seat.

I know the minister won't have a response to this now, but I'm asking for information again about this fellow Roch Theriault, the so-called Savage Messiah. Apparently the crown had catalogued something like 80 separate criminal charges against this individual and the OPP were preparing a dangerous offender application, but then the crown struck a plea bargain which will see this guy eligible for parole in five years, unescorted day pass in three years. I'd like to know what happened to the dangerous offender application and why it was withdrawn. I'm not sure about the process.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** That's with the AG's office.

**Mr Runciman:** Well, the OPP were preparing it. This is the information I was provided with.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** They may be assisting the crown. I'll check, and if we have any ownership I'll get it for you, but at this point I strongly, strongly suspect it's going to be AG and I'd be the wrong person.

**Mr Runciman:** I suspect you're right, but I wanted to pose that question and find out where it went, as best you can. If you can't answer it, I'll understand that.

Domestic assault statistics: I know you've mentioned the high priority the government is giving, proudly so, to domestic assaults. I was talking to a fellow today, a reporter, who called me and said he was looking into trying to get a handle on some domestic assault statistics. He was told by your ministry officials that the police file all of those stats with your ministry apparently, and that all of those stats have been warehoused in North Bay, that you're currently working on statistics from 1986 to 1991.

This individual was posing the question about how much of a priority this is. The police are required to compile these reports and file them with your ministry. When you're talking about development of policies, budgets and so on, how meaningful can the policy development or budget development process be when you are not apparently aware of what's really happening out there?

**Ms Noble:** We've had the information. I think one of the things we've not been able to do was to get the information pulled together in a way that it could be published, and it's the publishing that has been delayed. I think there's work being done in terms of trying to get a volume of those statistics out and then being much quicker in terms of getting the next round of statistics out and published. So it's the publication of the information in a way that makes it generally available that has had a delay problem.

**Mr Runciman:** So it's only the publication, you're saying. If you're in the policy or budget development process, you can go from, say, 1992, 1993, 1994, and you have all of those figures in front of you so that you can

make wise choices and decisions in respect to that?

**Ms Noble:** I wouldn't think that at this point, the fiscal year having just been closed, that we would have the 1993-94 figures compiled, but we do have figures that would be more recent than those that have been published.

**1700**

**Mr Runciman:** Why, when the media phoned about this, were they told they weren't available, they're all being warehoused in North Bay?

**Ms Noble:** We have Mr Dan McIntyre, who is the executive director in the strategic policy and planning area. That's the area responsible for this. Maybe he could come forward and just comment.

**The Chair:** Mr McIntyre, welcome. I believe you've been properly introduced.

**Mr Dan McIntyre:** Yes, thank you very much. The statistics have been transferred to North Bay and what we're trying to do right now is to in fact input the statistics into our computer system in North Bay so that we'll be able to provide those statistics on a more regular basis than they were before when they were more manually inputted and then put together. We'll be able to, as the deputy said, publish those on a regular basis.

But what we're faced with right now is making the transition from one system, in terms of handling the statistics, into another system and integrating that into the new system. There is a bit of a backlog there, but we do have a plan in place to get that inputted over the next few months.

**Mr Runciman:** So do you have a deadline date?

**Mr McIntyre:** Not a firm date, but the plan is that we will be hiring part-time staff to input that information over the next six months.

**Mr Runciman:** Contract staff?

**Mr McIntyre:** Yes.

**Mr Runciman:** Okay, thank you.

Dr Young, I just wanted to ask you about the Yeo inquest. The recommendations that came out of that inquest that relate to the SG or the corrections ministry, how many of those remain outstanding and have not been acted upon that you're aware of?

**Dr Young:** I can't give you a specific number that haven't been acted upon. I can give you a more general answer in the sense that the recommendations in relation to corrections and the Solicitor General related to a number of areas.

There are a number of projects under way within the ministry, in policing services, interministerial, because many of the issues also relate to the mental health system and corrections and the Solicitor General. Those projects are all actively under way and the recommendations are partially implemented. The simpler of the corrections ones have been implemented, but I actually haven't made a specific tally.

I'm following the recommendations very closely because I was the coroner who conducted the inquest and I'm vitally interested and I'm aware of the work. There are two people dedicated to the project of implementing



the policing side of them and they're doing that with a timetable. So the actual, final completion is not that high at this point but it's work in progress.

**Mr Runciman:** Operating from memory, general recommendation number 7 I think was to create some sort of a commission. Maybe it's difficult for me just tossing this at you, but it was to review parole processes and those kinds of things with a goal of providing additional protection for the public. Has anything been on that that you're aware of?

**Dr Young:** I'll defer to the minister in regard to that aspect. Certainly my job is to create the recommendation and to follow up. It's work in his hands right now.

**Mr Runciman:** Maybe we can delay that response until you've left the chair.

The Donaldson inquest you mentioned, what was the cost of that? Do you have a figure on that?

**Dr Young:** It's not completed yet. It's very difficult to estimate a cost. Much of the time the Donaldson inquest hasn't been sitting because there have been several trips to Divisional Court and one trip to the Court of Appeal in regard to legal issues concerning it. The appearance would be that it's been running in actual hearing days a long time and it probably appears to be more expensive than it in fact is. I would also mention that the Donaldson inquest is a mandatory inquest for us. We have no choice but to do that inquest under the Coroners Act.

**Mr Runciman:** This is because of a policeman being involved in the shooting?

**Dr Young:** He was considered legally to have been detained because he was warned that he was under arrest and prevented from leaving that room.

**Mr Runciman:** I see.

**Dr Young:** Under the Coroners Act, then, it's required. There had been considerations early on finding a way of streamlining that particular inquest. Unfortunately, we ran into some legal difficulties in regard to getting all the parties to agree to it, regrettably, but it certainly was attempted early on to see if we could do a faster inquest in that particular incident, because I recognized the emotion of that case would create problems in conducting the inquest.

**Mr Runciman:** The Centre of Forensic Sciences: Are you happy with the resources that you have available for the operation of the centre?

**Dr Young:** That's an interesting question, as Mr Christopherson looks at me.

**The Chair:** Isn't that a question for the Treasurer?

**Dr Young:** Ask me about the coroner system. The centre produces world-class work and is recognized as a world-class institution.

**Mr Runciman:** By whom? By police officials, the courts?

**Dr Young:** By the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, by policing people, by people from the FBI lab, by the RCMP. When I either lecture internationally or meet people in the forensic world, the Centre of Forensic Sciences in Ontario is an acknowledged leader in the

field. It's a highly technical and a very expensive area. It could always use more money because there are always evolving areas, but in terms of getting the job done and doing a first-class job, that's being done currently.

**Mr Runciman:** The pathologists whom you utilize for autopsies, how does that process work? You have a pool that you draw upon on a fee-for-service basis?

**Dr Young:** Yes, there are approximately 350 pathologists in the province who respond to coroners' warrants and do autopsies.

**Mr Runciman:** When you talk about forensic science, though, are all of these people trained in forensic science?

**Dr Young:** That's different. The Centre of Forensic Sciences has nothing to do with autopsies, despite everything in the paper each day. No bodies go to the Centre of Forensic Sciences. The forensic pathology is done at the coroner's office in Toronto or in the various hospitals across the province.

We've embarked on a program in the last two years where we are creating a series of centres of excellence in pathology and we're funding, in collaboration with several of the teaching universities, centres where we're moving our high-profile cases to be done by specialized forensic pathologists.

Those centres then can produce high-quality forensic pathology. They can train future forensic pathologists, because the residents in pathology go through the programs. They also act as a centre of research in regard to forensics. We are upgrading. There's still much to be done.

**Mr Runciman:** We talked about the backlog that the centre has. I know there was some criticism in respect to a prominent murder case a year or so ago, about a sample sitting on the shelf—that was the accusation, anyway—for a significant period of time. What's your reaction to that? I can't recall your reaction.

**Dr Young:** I have to be very careful about a reaction to a specific case. The general principle is that in situations such as that, and particularly at that point in time, the DNA unit was just beginning. There were submissions in a number of cases and sometimes large numbers of submissions were made.

It then becomes a matter of the investigators indicating to the centre which of the many samples should be prioritized in terms of testing, once that system and that agreement have been made and the particular prioritized samples are tested and the results turned over to the investigators.

**Mr Runciman:** Thanks. I have a couple of questions that I guess should be directed to Dr Humphries.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr Young. Dr Humphries, please introduce yourself, and welcome.

1710

**Dr Paul Humphries:** I'm Dr Paul Humphries. I'm a senior medical consultant and the manager of clinical services with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. I've been in this position since December 6, 1976.



**Mr Runciman:** I just wanted to talk to you about the problem of illicit drug use in the correctional facilities. How significant a problem is it and how are you addressing it?

**Dr Humphries:** Illicit drug use will probably always be present within correctional centres around the world. It's an ongoing problem, day in and day out. Inmates try to bring in additional contraband and staff do everything possible to try to control it. We have to worry about any intramuscular or intravenous use as it relates to the contraband drugs which are brought into the institution. I think our staff do a good job of controlling it, but I don't think it would ever be possible to stamp it out.

**Mr Runciman:** What about HIV testing? Do you have a view on mandatory testing? I think the suggestion of Dr Schabas at one point was that the Ministry of Health reclassify the virus under section 35 of the health protection act.

**Dr Humphries:** I don't really think that mandatory testing per se would be of that much value. Number one, we have the windows that we have to worry about. That means an individual may not show up positive for six weeks to six months, so if we did mandatory testing, we could definitely miss people who are coming in who are in fact positive.

We think it's much, much safer for our staff to be trained in Universal Precautions and to treat everyone as if they are infected with a communicable disease. As such, we've tried to provide them with the most up-to-date equipment and materials that are presently available and we've provided training to our staff twice since 1989 in regard to this new equipment and materials.

Perhaps I should add, even if we did move it from 22 to 35, I think there's a false understanding that this would mean all the correctional officers would know who was positive, but it really wouldn't mean that, because it would still be a medical confidentiality like, for instance, tuberculosis, which is part of the contagious and virulent disease groupings. We do tests on that for everyone admitted but, again, when we find a positive case, the staff are not notified, they're just told what precautions to take when dealing with the individual.

**Mr Runciman:** What about the use of methadone? Do you have a view on that?

**Dr Humphries:** Yes. I personally favour the use of methadone maintenance programs. In fact, I used it myself on patients quite a few years ago. There's always a major question, when a person comes in on a methadone maintenance program, whether to carry them on for some time. If the individual is going to be in for, say, 18 months, the general feeling is perhaps it's a good time to try to terminate the addiction and take them off.

If, for instance, they were on a maintenance program and were only going to be in for three months, two months, something like that, we probably would encourage our staff to carry the program through so they could return to the clinic and therapist upon release. It's really a matter of transferring an addiction, for instance, to heroin to, shall I say, a maintenance dose of methadone and it allows you to do the necessary testing, urinalysis

etc. The methadone maintenance program is very tightly controlled by the federal government. You can't just put a person on methadone and start treating them, even though you're a licensed physician within the province; you have to get a special licence from the federal government for every individual patient. So if we admit a person on a methadone maintenance program, rather than have two licences for the same patient, we would work with the agency or the physician involved and would use his prescriptions.

**Mr Runciman:** In terms of illicit drug use, you're not painting a very optimistic picture. What you're really saying is—I'm not being critical—that this is a problem that you don't think you can really do much about in terms of controlling the availability of illicit drugs and what you're saying is better training of staff and resources available to staff to deal with these sorts of situations.

I'm not sure where your responsibility lies in respect to what happened in Camp Dufferin. We can see those kinds of situations occurring again and again. Do you have any other advice that you might offer that the government should perhaps be looking at to deal with this problem?

**Dr Humphries:** I think that our people do a good job in their attempts at controlling illicit drugs within the institutions. There are so many examples of finding hollow heels and all kinds of things that prevent the inflow of the illicit drugs—

**Mr Runciman:** Are these mostly people who are leaving and sort of interim, go out for the weekend or come in for the weekend and leave to work during the week and that sort of thing, primarily?

**Dr Humphries:** Yes, that's possible or it's possible to throw drugs over exercise yards. There are so many ways. But one of the big ways of bringing drugs in is to bring them in in condoms and swallow them and then recover them at a later date.

So yes, it's a problem area, but our security people are always working on it, just as the inmates are always trying to think up new ways of doing it. It's been around over the ages and I think it'll be around for a while in the future.

**Mr Runciman:** That's all for now, Mr Chairman.

**Mr Donald Abel (Wentworth North):** I understand that the Ontario fire marshal is present today. Is that correct? I wonder if he could come forward and tell the committee a bit about the various fire prevention and educational programs that his office coordinates, a bit about the programs, a bit about how much is being spent. I think the committee would be very interested in getting that information from you, if you don't mind.

**Mr Bernard Moyle:** Bernard Moyle, Ontario fire marshal, and I've been the fire marshal four years today.

**The Chair:** Thank you and happy anniversary.

**Mr Moyle:** About our training and education programs, one of our major programs is Learn Not to Burn in the schools, where we have 40% of the schools in Ontario participating in fire safety education for children, compared to about 3% in the United States. We also have

a preschool program where there are approximately 1,500 day care centres teaching fire safety to children.

We also have a youthful fire setter program called TAPP-C, which is an intervention program for youthful fire setters that we're working on in cooperation with the Clarke Institute. That is a very sophisticated program and highly preventive and deals with the very big issue, which is youthful fire setters.

Earlier this year we created the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council. We brought all the stakeholders together—members of the public, members of industry, the fire services—to create this council. We have a focus on public education and prevention.

As the council, we wrote to the media and we asked them to put on free public safety messages for us and we had a terrific response. We had six television stations, about 40 newspapers and about 50 radio stations all giving us free public safety messages at no cost to government. We also have a magazine called the Messenger in which we emphasize public education and prevention for the fire service and give them programs which they can use.

We also are involved in a program with the municipal fire prevention officers during Fire Prevention Week in which we hope to put 50,000 smoke alarms in homes across the province. That's in partnership with Canadian Tire and we hope to raise somewhere between \$40,000 and \$80,000 through the council to help us promote Learn Not to Burn and further enhance those programs in the schools.

We have a lot of partnership programs. We recently had a partnership program with the chimney industry and we produced some pamphlets, and they shared in the cost of that. We're looking more and more to partnerships and raising money with our partners to promote public education and prevention.

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We also have a heavy emphasis in our training programs for volunteer firefighters. For example, of the 100-hour program that we deliver, 40% is dedicated to prevention and public education training for our volunteer firefighters.

We have a whole host of other programs, like the smoke alarm program, which the OFM administers in partnership with Dicon, and we've distributed about 26,000 smoke alarms through service clubs, many of them to needy families in communities at no cost to those families. The service clubs pick up the cost.

We're really getting a lot of mileage out of our programs at a very low cost with the office, so more and more we're getting a lot of benefit from the people in industry and our partners in the fire service.

**Mr Abel:** I just wonder if you had any figures that you could give us, approximately what you spend.

**Mr Moyle:** I believe our estimate's around \$175,000, which includes the publication of our Messenger magazine.

**Mr Abel:** That's annually?

**Mr Moyle:** Yes.

**Mr Abel:** That's it for me.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Wayne Lessard):** Mr Mills.

**Mr Mills:** Thank you very much, Mr Chair, and I promise this is the last time that I'll ask the coroner to come forward. I know the previous Chair has made a decision that at the end of the day the coroner could go, and I'm just wondering if we could reach some agreement and, after my brief question to the coroner, bearing in mind the lateness of the hour, we could make some decision to allow him to go without waiting till the bitter end. I ask you to take that into consideration.

**The Acting Chair:** I'm really at the hands of the committee in that regard. It depends on whether there are any further questions anticipated.

**Mr Mills:** Anyway, we'll think about that after my question, I hope. It's going to be short.

Doctor, I understand that the RCMP lab is closing down. My question is, can you see what impact that's going to have on you and your staff and your centre and your budget and things like that?

**Dr Young:** A very direct impact. The RCMP have indicated that their intention is to phase out the lab in Ottawa. The lab in Ottawa hasn't been the primary lab, obviously, in the province. The Centre of Forensic Sciences and the northern lab have been the two primary labs, but they have been doing a fair degree of work in eastern Ontario.

The problems are twofold then. Those particular tests that are done in Ottawa will need to be done, presumably, between northern Ontario and Toronto, and there's the further problem of developing the expertise within the lab, because that will require that additional people be hired.

But there's a steep learning curve within the centre, so we're looking at two years before someone is ready to go to court, and even then the level of what they can do in a case is still somewhat limited. It's a problem that's going to have to be overcome, and unfortunately, in terms of provincial dollars, it will cost money. The federal government will save; the province will somehow undoubtedly end up paying.

**Mr Mills:** Thank you, Dr Young. I don't want to get political, but we know this offloading is going on all the time. Thank you for that answer.

Now, Mr Chair, I don't believe our caucus has any more questions of the coroner. I don't think Mr Murphy has. Have you?

**Mr Murphy:** Oh, you've decided that.

**Mr Mills:** I'm interested in expediency and letting the good Dr Young proceed home.

**Mr Murphy:** Can I ask how much time we have left in our estimates time?

**Mr Mills:** I beg your pardon, Tim. If you've got a question, I'm quite willing—

**Mr Murphy:** No, the reason I ask is because there is some material that is coming forward from a variety of directions, and I assume if we have under two hours the next time we do this, we'll use up all the time. Am I correct in that assumption?



**The Acting Chair:** It's possible that we could, but I don't know, depending on the material. In any event, we have one member of the committee who's absent right now. He may have some questions.

**Mr Murphy:** Do you know how much time we have left in total on our estimates? An hour, an hour and a half?

**Mr Mills:** I'm just trying to be helpful.

**Mr Murphy:** As am I. I'm trying to get to the result we all want, which is to excuse any witnesses—

**Mr Mills:** Notwithstanding that, I guess we can wait.

**Mr Murphy:** That's fine.

**The Acting Chair:** Do you have any more questions, Mr Mills?

**Mr Mills:** No. How much time have we got?

**Mr Noel Duignan (Halton North):** Till 6 o'clock.

**Mr Mills:** No, our caucus, our round. Oh, here's Mr Runciman back, so it's no problem.

**The Acting Chair:** About 10 minutes.

**Mr Mills:** Oh, that's no problem. We can rephrase the question now. We had suggested that Dr Young was going to wait until the end of the evening. If you hadn't got any questions, I was just wondering—no?

**Mr Runciman:** No.

**Mr Murphy:** We can excuse Dr Young.

**Interjection:** Maybe he wants to stay.

**Mr Mills:** Maybe he wants to stay, but I don't think so. I don't want to, but I have to.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr Mills, do you have any further questions?

**Mr Mills:** How much time have we got, Mr Chair?

**The Acting Chair:** You have about 10 minutes.

**Mr Mills:** Okay, let my colleague from Halton ask a question and then I'll come back. I've got lots of questions for ever.

**Mr Duignan:** I understand there's a person who will be able to enlighten us in regard to the education and prevention programs here this evening?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes. Doctor, do you want to come forward?

**Mr Duignan:** I wonder if you could state your name.

**Dr Angle:** I did that earlier. It's Dr Terry Angle and I'm the acting chief education officer for the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. I've been in the role since March 1 of this year.

**Mr Duignan:** The minister stated yesterday that in combination with appropriate levels of supervision it has been shown to reduce the likelihood of future anti-social behaviour. That's the whole question of education, rehabilitation, literacy training etc.

Before we get into that, I was looking at the estimates review of the education programs in the ministry facilities. Most of them have a cost figure to those programs, except a couple, and one of those is the young offender open custody sites. There are some 27 of those sites around the province. You stated that most school boards negotiate these agreements directly with the residence and

it's not known exactly what the cost is and how many teachers are involved. In this day of accountability, why is that the case?

**Dr Angle:** First of all, there's no cost to our ministry because these section 27 agreements are three-party agreements between our ministry, the local boards of education that provide the service—and we have partnerships with about 34 of them, I think it is—and the Ministry of Education and Training, which provides the funding through section 27 of its general legislative grants. The funding flows directly to the school boards and not to us, so we wouldn't know the exact dollar amount. The Ministry of Education and Training would likely have that information.

The numbers of teachers: The section 27 agreements are renewed and reviewed annually around this time of year. Approvals are given by the Ministry of Education and Training regional offices around the middle of May for the next school year, so that would be the 1994-95 school year. The numbers of teachers employed by the local boards to provide service in our facilities will vary from year to year. Sometimes the numbers of teachers go up in number, sometimes they go down. The average teacher's salary will change from year to year depending on who's being employed by the boards.

**Mr Duignan:** I guess it was in the public accounts committee that indeed we looked at the whole question of special education, over \$1 billion a year spent in this province on special education. Out of that, section 27 funds come. But even in public accounts we couldn't get the amount of money that's spent in relation to this. How do we know, for example, the amount of money allocated under section 27 to the correctional institutions and in fact spent by the correctional institutions and not elsewhere?

**Dr Angle:** I think I can answer that question. The Ministry of Education and Training spends, on an annual basis, approximately \$66 million for section 27 agreements in care, treatment and correctional facilities. We only get a portion of that money. In fact, we don't even get the money because the money gets sent to the school boards to employ—

**Mr Duignan:** It's allocated.

**Dr Angle:** That's right, it's allocated to the school boards that provide the service. It's \$66 million a year approximately and it's frozen, to my understanding, at 1992-93 school year levels. The money spent this year was the same as what was spent in 1992-93, and it will be the same amount of money next year.

The numbers of teachers will go up and down, depending on the agreements, because they're monitored and reviewed and renewed annually. As I mentioned earlier, it's a three-party agreement.

It's hard to have precise information. At the moment, I wouldn't be able to find out without contacting six Ministry of Education and Training regional offices the number of agreements that we'll actually have in place for the 1994-95 school year. As I say, the approvals happen around this time and we'll know shortly, but we don't have that information yet.



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**Mr Duignan:** Because the continuing education is funded the same way, you have no idea of the figures.

**Dr Angle:** That's right; same reason.

**Mr Duignan:** Just a point. In the federal institutions, do they apply to the same program? Does the provincial Ministry of Education and Training pick up the cost of the continuing education to the federal system?

**Dr Angle:** I believe they do. I'm not very familiar with the federal system. It's not my area of expertise, but I believe they have access to the section 27 dollars as well, yes.

**Mr Duignan:** Who monitors the progress of the various programs offered in the open custody sites of the young offenders?

**Dr Angle:** School board officials, along with the Ministry of Education and Training regional office personnel. They have people designated to approve the section 27 agreements and it's their responsibility to monitor and review them on an annual basis.

**Mr Duignan:** One of the concerns we had, again in public accounts, was whether we were getting actually value for our money on these particular programs. If you don't know the amount of money being spent and the teachers involved in it, how do you know you're getting value for your money in these institutions?

**Dr Angle:** It's an interesting question. In fact, I'll be at a meeting of the Ministry of Ed and Training tomorrow—it's an all-day meeting, I believe—to review section 27 programs. Each regional office of MET, the Ministry of Ed and Training, has administrative guidelines, and they're not all the same. The administrative guidelines give some guidance to the boards on what to provide, how to provide the programs, the number of teachers to employ based on class size, ratios and that sort of thing. We're going to be looking at those guidelines tomorrow, and we're also going to be looking at the funding mechanism. They're beginning to open up dialogue because they're concerned about the freezing of dollars, for one. The boards can only operate with a cap that's been placed at 1992-93 school year levels, so there's the same money to go around and of course inflationary costs.

**Mr Duignan:** And also whether those programs are effective or not; whether they're actually achieving the goals they set out to achieve. Would you ever find out that information? Would the school boards pass that information on to you?

**Dr Angle:** No, not unless we ask them. Once the boards are in place and they're providing the service through their personnel, we can't compel them to give us information. We can ask, encourage and that sort of thing, but we don't collect that information currently.

**Mr Duignan:** So if you don't know that, then how does that fit in with the minister's statement? It says that "intervention, including psychological treatment, education, literacy training...have been shown to reduce the likelihood of future anti-social behaviour."

**Dr Angle:** Maybe I'll defer to the minister since he made the statement.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** It looked like something was happening in the House. I'm sorry. What was the question?

**Mr Duignan:** The question was the educational programs and I guess the intervention programs or literacy training, whatever is offered in the open custody sites under the young offender program. Obviously, your ministry has no control of what happens in those programs. There's no monitoring system in place. You don't know whether they're effective or anything else. So how does that fit into your statement that says that these particular programs are shown to reduce the likelihood of future anti-social behaviour when you don't know the results coming from those programs?

**Ms Noble:** I think in terms of the references there, it wouldn't be just in the open custody. We're talking about literacy programs in general, and I think we're dealing with general literature to deal with the better provision of offenders with life skills issues, skills they need in terms of going back into the public.

**Mr Duignan:** But surely the people who are in the young offender programs are in need of these life skill programs. If you've no way of monitoring whether these programs are effective or not in these institutions, how do you know that these programs will be effective and help to reduce the likelihood of these people ending up in adult institutions?

**Ms Noble:** I think you're asking the question from the point of view specifically of young offenders in open custody. The statement being made is a much more general statement in terms of the overall correctional institutions. You're asking specifically, do we have evaluation on the section 27 agreements and how they're operating with young offenders? We've had the answers here. That doesn't negate the fact that we have general programs for the general population.

**Mr Duignan:** Again, we don't know whether we're getting value for our money. We don't know whether these programs are effective and we don't know that these programs are the right types of programs that should be offered in these institutions or not. Are you going to look at it to make sure in fact that will be the case in the future?

**Dr Angle:** If I could interject, that's one of the questions we're going to be looking at tomorrow in the section 27 review meeting. It's a committee that was active for a number of years, to my understanding, and it's been reactivated. We're going to be looking at the funding mechanism that's currently in place and whether or not that should be changed. We're going to be looking at the administrative guidelines that the boards have to use when the Ministry of Ed is approving the agreements. It's kind of out of our hands.

What our ministry does is provide the space for the program and some resources but, by and large, it's the responsibility of the board to provide the service and for the Ministry of Ed and Training, which authorizes the funding, to monitor those agreements and review them.

**Mr Duignan:** I agree. I guess you could work with the Ministry of Education and make sure that indeed was

the case, that the programs being offered were the appropriate programs.

**Dr Angle:** We try to do that. I mentioned earlier that we have partnerships with 34 school boards around the province. Our biggest partnership is with the Ministry of Education and Training because they fund a great number of our educational programs, through section 27 agreements, through the continuing education agreements, which are also reviewed and monitored by them, again on an annual basis, and through OTAB, OTAB being formally part of the Ministry of Education and Training. Some of the literacy programs are funded by OTAB and they come into our facilities as well. They're our biggest partner.

**Mr Duignan:** Yes. The concern I have is that there are young people—there is a problem that needs to be corrected and the follow-up that needs to take place after that once they leave the institution as well. I was concerned in the public accounts committee that there doesn't seem to be any control—know what's happening. I'm glad to see that you're moving in that direction, trying to put some measure of control and responsibility back on there again.

Another question: Do you have any figures—

**The Chair:** You're just about out of time.

**Mr Duignan:** Okay. I'll come back to further questions later.

**The Chair:** Next Tuesday.

**Mr Murphy:** How much time do I have?

**The Chair:** We'll let you run the clock until 6. That gives you 25 minutes, and we'll do 25-minute rotations.

**Mr Murphy:** Okay. I would like to ask some questions related to the fire marshal and the minister. One of them I asked in the course of the opening comments section and that was related to the budget of the fire marshal's office. I think I said, and it could very well be because I missed it, that the line item allocation for the fire marshal's office is, in terms of actual, what the estimate amount is this year and in previous years. Could someone just point me to the right section or give me that information, if it's not in here in a line item form?

**Ms Noble:** Page 25.

**Interjection:** Page 20 of the estimates briefing book.

**The Chair:** Page 20, we're advised, is what you're looking for.

**Mr Murphy:** I have that page in front of me. Are fire safety services the same as the fire marshal's office? Are there other things besides the fire marshal's office in that line item?

**The Chair:** Who's your question to, Mr Murphy?

**Mr Murphy:** Whoever can answer it.

**The Chair:** Whoever. Could whoever identify themselves? The deputy.

**Ms Noble:** The fire services activity is the budget of the fire marshal's office. There's nothing else in that.

**Mr Murphy:** Okay. So I'm right that there's a slight decrease, a little under a 1% decrease, in the amount allocated to the fire marshal's office then. So, depending

on inflation and all that, there's maybe a couple of per cent drop, although it depends on which month you measure it from these days.

The reason I wanted to ask you is I had, among others, some fire chiefs in fairly recently to talk to me who were keen on the maintenance of the fire marshal's office and thought it was a good body and were concerned about rumours they had heard about change in function, scope, activity. What I want to do is give you, as fire marshal, and you, as minister, an opportunity to set those fears at rest and to help me understand what the direction of the government is regarding the fire marshal's office. Whoever, the minister or fire marshal.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** The marshal wants to explain in detail where the areas are of the constraints and then I'll talk to the broader policy question.

**Mr Moyle:** We've been undergoing a number of changes in the office of the fire marshal to streamline and re-engineer our services. The budget allocation that we have right now—we'd all like more, but as far as I'm concerned, it is very manageable and we can provide the level of service to the fire service, particularly the volunteer community, that we have in the past. We're going to do that in a very different way, in the sense that we're promoting programs that make the fire service more self-sufficient in areas and give them greater accessibility to things like training and education.

I don't have a great deal of concern although, as I said earlier, you would always like to have a little bit more, but I'm very confident that we can meet the needs of the fire service. In fact, I think we're doing a better job now than we were four or five years ago in the delivery of services. We're having a much higher impact with our fire services and providing much more support to them in a different way.

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**Mr Murphy:** Let me just follow up on that briefly before I go to the minister. When you say "re-engineering," looking at it from the outside, does mean that the services I used to get from the fire marshal's office I'm not going to get, or are you telling me you're going to do the same service and provide the same service level, but you're just doing it that much better and therefore cheaper?

**Mr Moyle:** I think we're doing it better. For example, training used to be a problem. We've developed a learner-focused approach to training, in cooperation with the fire chiefs association and in consultation with the associations. At one time, where we used to use a traditional approach to training, which was a classroom approach, we now use an approach where volunteers or any firefighter can learn in their own communities, and we train the facilitators and qualify the facilitators to train. We provide all the resource material, we provide student learning guides, and so essentially our role would be to be the standard-setter, the creator of the systems, and then we would qualify the key fire service people to deliver.

Right now, when this program comes on stream this year, all 30,000 firefighters in Ontario will have equal



access to training, which is a vast improvement over what it was a couple of years ago. That's done with the strong support of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and the professional standard-setting body of the Ontario fire services.

**Mr Murphy:** Let me just go at a specific as a way to illustrate the point. We've seen in the estimates tabled, and we only have a couple of years, that there was a significant drop between 1992-93 and 1993-94 in terms of investigations conducted: from 1,700 to 1,200.

**Mr Moyle:** Yes.

**Mr Murphy:** That could easily be interpreted on the face of it as what you've done to meet the constraints is to cut down on the number of investigations conducted. I'm wondering if you could help me understand.

**Mr Moyle:** Yes, of course, and it's a good question. We were short three investigators last year. We investigated all major arson fires, all fire deaths and all gaseous explosions. There was also a reduction in the number of calls for our office, thankfully, last year. As far as I'm concerned, there's no attempt to reduce that service. We haven't had any complaints from the fire service about that and we've been able to deal with the problem. The three new investigators will be on stream some time within the next month or so and that will add additional support and bring us up to strength.

**Mr Murphy:** Your estimate for 1994-95 is, though, a number that is quite similar to your 1993-94 actual.

**Mr Moyle:** Yes.

**Mr Murphy:** What is that based on? If you're saying that it was a drop in demand, are you foreseeing that drop in demand to continue as opposed to the historic trend?

**Mr Moyle:** It's unpredictable. Fires go in cycles. One of the things that is happening with fire investigations is that we're spending a longer time on investigations. Insurance companies and private investigators are also involved now to a much greater degree than they were in the past, so our investigations are taking more time. We're getting more questions from those people, so there's a lot more support involved in providing information in regard to those investigations.

We've also looked at some of the investigations we were doing. For example, this year's stats show that we did a large number of large-loss fires, but we no longer do large-loss fires just because they're large-loss fires; they have to be incendiary or somehow connected to our role in the fire marshal's office.

As far as the numbers go, they probably increased slightly. We always have turn downs in the sense that the manager in the field can say, "This isn't an essential investigation." But all essential investigations are being covered and are being covered well, and we haven't had a problem in that area.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I had an occasion not long ago to address the provincial association of fire chiefs' convention and I knew that the rumours were floating through the chiefs' community that not only was there a possibility we were going to eliminate the fire marshal's office, but that we were going to shut down and eliminate

the Ontario Fire College. I made it very clear at that convention that while constraints and other fiscal matters make it difficult to sometimes do all that we would like, there's absolutely no consideration whatsoever taking place with regard to the elimination or removal of either of those two important fire service entities.

**Mr Murphy:** I wanted to talk a bit about the social contract and the impact on fire services. The minister advised yesterday, I believe, that you had expressed some opinion to date on the impact of the social contract. I just can't remember, but I wonder, now that you're here, if you could tell me yourself.

**Mr Moyle:** Yes. We've been monitoring that situation very closely with the 33 full-time fire departments, because that's where the greatest impact is. In the compressed period between August and December, our statistics showed that there was actually a slight improvement as far as firefighter injuries and fire losses were concerned.

I think there's a slight increase in the cost of each fire, but the per capita loss was down, which would indicate that there had been a number of large-loss fires in that time frame, which can happen at any time. As of the end of the year, as far as I was concerned, there was nothing to show me that there was anything going on out there that was a concern, notwithstanding that there's always the potential for problems.

During this particular year, the average social contract time allotment to the full-time fire departments is 1.55%, which is fairly low. As a matter of fact, 12 have no days off. A couple have the maximum, which was a bit of an area of concern. The fire losses: This was a very severe winter and the fire losses were up. You would expect that, so we can continue to monitor that, but fire deaths are down about 20% this year, and that's really the key indicator for me. There has been a substantial drop in fire deaths this year over last, and last year was our second-best year that we've had as far back as I can remember.

We continue to monitor the situation. If anything of any concern arises, I immediately notify the minister of those concerns.

**Mr Murphy:** My concern about the social contract impact on firefighters is not so much—I don't think we'll see anything. Well, we may, but I don't think we'll see a result that we can point directly to in a short-term analysis. In fact, you're going to have to see three- and four-year statistics before you start seeing the impact. While we can take whatever comfort, diverse as that may be, from what you say about the last eight or nine months' worth of operation, I'm not sure that's going to be an indicator, frankly, one way or the other, in the long term. I think that's on either side of the issue.

I want to follow up on the issue of occupational health and safety. I'm just trying to get a sense of where this is at. I know some representations have been made by firefighters—quite a lengthy one by Peter Ferguson, I think his name is, from Kitchener—he's their labour relations fellow—who drafted quite a lengthy document to the Ministry of Labour about a regulation.

I'm wondering if you, as the fire marshal, have a view



on the kinds of things that are being requested in terms of setting a standard that should be applied in the workplace for firefighters and whether the minister has made representation to the Ministry of Labour in that regard. If so, where are we at?

**Mr Moyle:** This is essentially, as you're aware, a Ministry of Labour issue. My understanding is that the Minister of Labour has announced that he would be looking at a regulation specific to the fire services.

There's a section 21 committee, which is made up of the firefighters' associations and management and Ministry of Labour. We are not a member of the section 21 committee, my office. We provide advice and act as an adviser to that committee, so we would have input into that. We don't have any difficulty with a regulation, at least my office or me personally, for the fire service, as long as it's carefully crafted. I think there are certain things that may or may not be in there.

**Mr Murphy:** It does concern me that you don't have a direct input, frankly. There are public safety concerns involved in that that would be part of it; I mean, everything from the site versus truck staffing issues to the—what's it called—pass alarm kind of issues that are being asked for in terms of the regulation.

**Mr Moyle:** Yes.

**Mr Murphy:** Mr Minister, I think that some representations should be made to have the fire marshal play a role in that, more than just: "Here's a copy of the document. What are your thoughts?"

**Mr Moyle:** I guess the regulation has been announced. The Minister of Labour has not decided how he wants to proceed with that. My assumption is that a great deal of the work will go through the section 21 committee. We are always asked for our advice and our assistance. We have put out a staffing study paper for the fire service and that has gone through the section 21 committee. So we do have positions on some of these issues, and sometimes fairly strong positions on some of these issues.

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**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I would also say that the development and approval of regulations is a cabinet matter where everybody who's involved in any way has an opportunity to have input. So if you want the assurance that the perspective of fire services will be there as this regulation is developed, you have that.

Obviously I draw greatly on the expertise of the fire marshal and others. I'm not a fire service expert, but having received the advice and opinions of my senior officials, then indeed I do, in all cases where there are regulations affecting my areas of responsibility, ensure that I'm having input at the right level in addition to ensuring the deputy is engaged at her level to reflect our views. I can say to you, Tim, that because it's a public safety ministry, there's not usually a lot of wrangling around the positions that we take among my colleagues.

**Mr Murphy:** I want to talk briefly about basement apartments. The legislation is now passed and got royal assent, I think, in the last few days. There were lots of concerns raised about safety of basement apartments and

whether or not the bill gives firefighters, in essence, the tools to make those places safe. I'm wondering if you could give me a view grounded in public safety and fire safety from the fire marshal's office perspective on whether or not you've been given the tools to adequately ensure that existing basement apartments are safe.

**Mr Moyle:** The legislation for existing basement apartments will be under the fire code, which is separate and distinct from Bill 120. That regulation was drafted in the normal process that we use with all of our stakeholders, including the fire chiefs and fire prevention officers. I think it's a good regulation, a fair and balanced regulation, and I'm very confident that that regulation in itself will provide an adequate level of life and fire safety for the people in this province. I'm very confident of that.

**Mr Murphy:** Do you believe there is a virtue in having a registry and inspection system for basement apartments?

**Mr Moyle:** I think there's some merit in that. That's not part of our regulation.

**Mr Murphy:** I understand that.

**Mr Moyle:** That regulation comes under the act. I think that's an issue for a municipality to decide, whether they want that registered or not.

The concern I have is that everybody's been focusing on a regulation. If you look at the deaths that have occurred in Mississauga, in Brampton, the unfortunate instance of those children, in every case there was a municipal bylaw which required a smoke alarm, and in every case there wasn't a smoke alarm.

Part of our process and part of our strategy will be to have a public education and awareness program around that, and I think that's an essential part. In some ways, I think it's more important than a regulation in itself. One can't be separated from the other. If people just continue to look at the regulatory requirements rather than making people more aware of why they should do it and how they should do it and what it means to their safety, that's a mistake in itself. So our strategy will be around trying to educate the public to bring those apartments into compliance.

**Mr Murphy:** There is some concern, and it may or may not be appropriate, related to where we have—I forget the technical term—essentially a three-level response to alarms: the ambulance, police and fire all responding to calls.

**Mr Moyle:** Tiered response.

**Mr Murphy:** Tiered response. That's the one. One of the concerns expressed to me was about the notion of moving to having firefighters provide essentially the emergency care as mandated service. I think generally firefighters tend to be there first, so they would provide the paramedical-type care and they would be mandated to do that.

**Mr Moyle:** Yes.

**Mr Murphy:** My question to you is, do you think that is a sensible way to go? Does it raise any public safety concerns from the perspective of firefighters being called to do that and therefore not having time for other things? Is it appropriate from a public safety concern?

**Mr Moyle:** Those models exist in the United States. It does raise some concerns, particularly when you talk about paramedics. At the present time, firefighters are viewed as a first responder and they can intervene in a situation, precisely as you said, because they can get there usually within four minutes, at which time they can give oxygen or CPR or so on. That's their role at this time, followed by, I guess, in some cases a more qualified ambulance service and then in some cases backed up by paramedic support.

But if you're looking at a paramedic system for the fire service, that's a dramatic change. It's a major policy decision around those kinds of things by government. The training involved to become a paramedic and the payoffs in lives saved is something that I think is constantly being evaluated now in Metropolitan Toronto. Certainly a model could be created if government wanted to do that, but a paramedic could be on the scene of an emergency for an hour, an hour and a half, two hours, and all the time that paramedic is on the scene, if it's a firefighter, that's a firefighter removed from an emergency response.

There are some issues around there. They're solvable, they're workable in some cases, but again it's a major change and a major policy decision.

**Mr Murphy:** The defibrillation machines: Would that be part of a paramedical-type response?

**Mr Moyle:** Many fire departments are now carrying defibs and using them effectively. We have worked with the Ministry of Health to put out a discussion paper and a position paper for the fire service on how to implement those programs with their health councils in their own communities. Fire departments are very active. In fact, in the city of Hamilton they are the first to start and they're using those.

**Mr Murphy:** I want to put one question just on the record for the minister so that I can get the answer when we're back. I thank the fire marshal. I do not have any more questions of the fire marshal for the future, so the question I have for the minister, quickly, is on statistics around firearms offences in the Criminal Code. What I want to gather, to the extent that the ministry has them, are charges laid around all firearms, not just section 85 but firearms offences under the code, and disposition. That would be by way of withdrawal, acquittal or conviction.

**Ms Noble:** I think the ministry does have some information on offences and charges. The data we have available are compiled at the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. I'm not sure whether that also includes the disposition questions. If it does, as public information we'd have it available. Our ministry would not have available itself the disposition information.

**Mr Murphy:** Would it be easy to get? Does it get it from the Attorney General? Do you ever use that information to assess the effectiveness of the charges laid, the appropriateness of the charges laid?

**Ms Noble:** I don't know how accessible that information is.

**Mr Murphy:** I think I've probably used up the time.

**The Chair:** We're certainly going to find out next Tuesday how hard it was to get.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'm not going to touch it, because the last time I touched your last question of the day, I damned near fell into it.

**The Chair:** I believe there was a request, Minister, for the Attorney General's letter to your office regarding the Clinton Suzack matter, and you can get back to Mr Runciman about that—

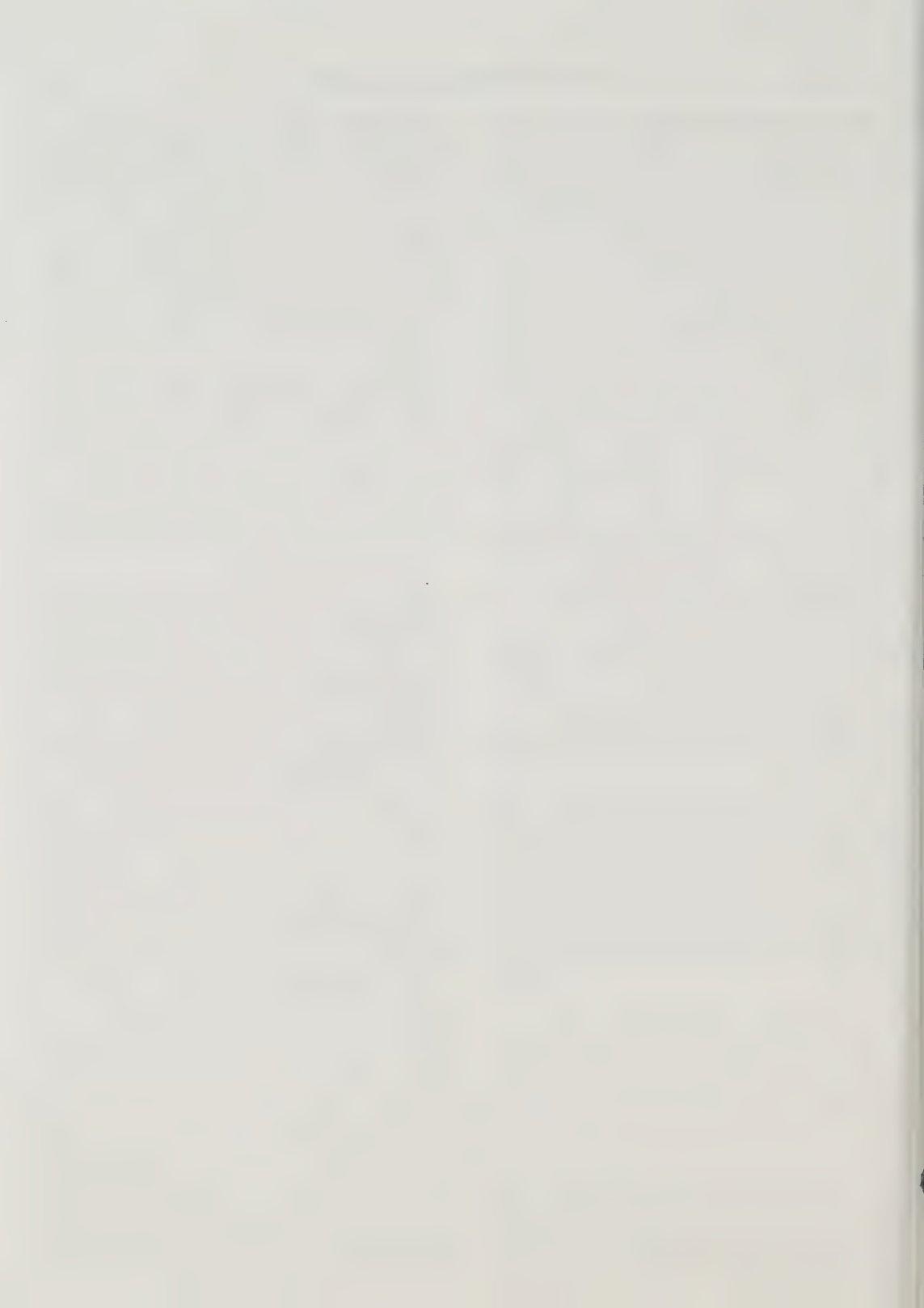
**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes.

**The Chair:** —and that someone from the Ontario Board of Parole, a chair, vice-chair or the senior civil servant involved be available. The materials that can come forward, if they are ready and given to the clerk, can be circulated to the critics, and that'll be helpful to the process if they're ready before next Tuesday when we reconvene.

I have to indicate on committee business, if I may, that we're stacking not only our votes but our ministries. If we can start exactly at 3:30, we will commence, after the one hour and 30 minutes approximately left for the Sol Gen and corrections ministry, we then proceed to begin immediately with Health. So it's important that we attempt to start on time. It will be the decision of the Chair to start on time at 3:30, out of fairness to the Minister of Health, who is coming at 5 o'clock.

With that understanding, I'd like to adjourn this meeting to reconvene on Tuesday, June 7, at 3:30 or immediately following routine proceedings, in committee room 2.

The committee adjourned at 1800.







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Dr Paul Humphries, senior medical consultant and manager, clinical services, correctional services division  
Bernard Moyle, Ontario fire marshal

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Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)  
Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Mills, Gordon (Durham East/-Est ND) for Mr Wiseman  
Murphy, Tim (St George-St David L) for Mr Mahoney  
Runciman, Robert W. (Leeds-Grenville PC) for Mr Arnott

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** McLellan, Ray, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 7 June 1994

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 7 juin 1994



**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministry of the Solicitor General  
and Correctional Services

Ministère du Solliciteur général  
et des Services correctionnels

Ministry of Health

Ministère de la Santé

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## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 7 June 1994

Mardi 7 juin 1994

The committee met at 1545 in committee room 2.

MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL  
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We have approximately an hour and 30 minutes remaining for the estimates of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services.

In rotation, I believe we're ready to proceed with Mr Runciman's questions for 25 minutes. The minister has advised me that the staff and the chair from the Ontario Board of Parole are here as per your request and that the package of the minister's staff responses are on their way in sufficient copies for the committee.

**Hon David Christopherson (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** The only thing to add is, there are one or two pieces that are still required, but the overwhelming majority of them are in a full, comprehensive package that's on its way.

**The Chair:** Good. We'll proceed with Mr Runciman.

**Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** In respect of the package and the parole board officials, what was the response in respect of my request to have a copy of the Attorney General's letter of advice to you related to the release of Clinton Suzack?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes, I said I would undertake to determine whether we could release that. I've done so. We're advised that we can. I have copies here. I don't know if they're in the package or separate.

**Ms Michele Noble:** They're separate.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Separate. I have the letter here. We can circulate it now, if you want, Chair.

**The Chair:** Please.

**Ms Noble:** Just a further point of explanation—well, you can read the letter when you get it. It's a letter to myself from the Deputy Attorney General.

**Mr Runciman:** I wonder if we could have the officials from the parole board come forward.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes. We have Don Wadel, who is the chair of the Ontario Board of Parole, and also Ken Sandhu, who is the executive vice-chair. Both are here to answer questions the committee may have.

**Mr Runciman:** Mr Wadel, could you advise us what's happened with respect to the parole board? I gather you've been advised not to talk about the circumstances surrounding the release of Clinton Suzack, which are certainly of interest to me and a lot of other Ontarians, especially people in the Sudbury area.

I'm just wondering if you can advise us as to what

kinds of changes have occurred within the parole board in the last eight to 10 months, if any, from an administrative perspective, from a personnel perspective and anything you might be able to comment on.

**Mr Don Wadel:** The parole board is constantly undergoing change to try and help us to better fulfil our mandate, which is to contribute to the protection of the community, and there are ongoing activities that help us to work in that direction.

In terms of specific things that have been done, I could relate things in three areas: in terms of information required for the board, in terms of accountability of members and processes for conducting hearings and in terms of our ability to report on the relative success of parole. All of these areas are long-term developments that the board's been working on for a number of years, but some of those elements have come to fruition more recently.

**Mr Runciman:** How long have you been the chairman?

**Mr Wadel:** About a year and a half.

**Mr Runciman:** So, since you've moved into this office, you're saying nothing new in terms of personnel changes, administrative changes, has occurred and in fact most of these initiatives were undertaken and committed to some years ago.

**Mr Wadel:** Yes. It's been an evolution, and I think there will always be an evolution of steps to try and ensure that we improve our ability to assess and predict risk in particular, to make sure that the content and quality of information that's available to board members are continually improving. As the knowledge improves in terms of what's available through research findings and so on, we're learning more all the time about ability to identify risk factors and apply them to some predictive ability.

Also, I think most recently what has improved in our ability to report on the relative success of parole is that we have operationalized a management information system that was recommended by the standing committee on government agencies. That's fully functioning now, and it will help us to highlight not only the characteristics of people we're seeing and whether victims or observers are involved, but also what the outcomes are.

We're able to track now very specifically, for instance, how many cases result in revocation and, of those cases, where there is reoffending present and what the nature of that reoffending was. That allows us then to continue to develop other processes to examine cases that are unsuccess-

cessful and see if there are ways that we can, again, continue to improve our practices to better be able to predict risk and to make sure that we're easing people into the community at a minimal risk to that community.

**Mr Runciman:** I know you've been advised not to talk about a specific case, for reasons which I don't agree with, without seeing the letter but just from the minister's stand on this issue. But in a general way, one area you didn't mention was, when you have an application before you for parole and you have access to CPIC, the Canadian Police Information Centre, is there not some sort of process whereby you would review an individual's record to ensure that there were no outstanding warrants against any individual applying for parole within Ontario, outstanding warrants either within this jurisdiction or outside of Ontario? Is that not a normal course of the review process?

**Mr Wadel:** Yes, it is. In fact, that constitutes some of the core information that's required for us to proceed with any case. Whether or not there are outstanding warrants, we're required to provide hearings for people who are eligible, and that's people between six months and up to two years less a day. The fact that a warrant may be present doesn't mean that they're no longer eligible.

Certainly that information is presented to us. We make every effort to encourage the offender to address outstanding matters, and that's really in his own self-interest, because if in fact parole were granted and an outstanding warrant was executed, it could result in a disruption of the parole period or the termination of the parole period. So we make every effort to encourage them to deal with that, and there are mechanisms in the ministry to pursue that warrant by notifying the jurisdiction where the warrant is held and trying to get them to act on it.

What we find, though, is that in some cases the warrant is a radius warrant and it can only be acted upon if the person is physically present in that region. In other cases, the jurisdiction chooses not to pursue or execute the warrant.

So what the board does is, if there is an outstanding warrant, we proceed with a full hearing and make a decision based on the merits of the case, but the fact that there is an outstanding warrant would be registered as a significant factor in determining whether that person is prepared to become a law-abiding member of the community.

**Mr Runciman:** I find this extremely difficult, trying to talk around an issue, but your background, as someone advised me, was part of your appointment. You were with the John Howard Society?

**Mr Wadel:** Yes. My full background is, I was eight years as an assistant superintendent of a correctional centre in Alberta and then eight years as executive director of a branch of the John Howard Society. In both cases, the objectives were very similar: to protect the community from the social and financial costs of crime. So my background includes both institutional and community experience.

**Mr Runciman:** I guess that most people, perhaps

incorrectly, look at John Howard as sort of an advocate, a voice for ex-cons, people who have served time or have been incarcerated. So your immediate role prior to coming to the parole board was as an advocate for people who had served time in provincial or federal institutions.

**Mr Wadel:** It's not an advocate. The John Howard Society's mission is, again, to provide services, to reduce the social and financial costs of crime, to try and provide very specific treatment services, basically the same type of services that are in existing institutions, to reduce risk of repeat criminal behaviour. It's not advocating on behalf of people.

The society's programs are there to try and reduce reoffending by reducing the risks and needs that any individual offender might present. So it's certainly not, as you're describing it, an advocacy group.

**Mr Runciman:** This is a little awkward, I'm sure, for you, as it is for me, but recently the chair of the federal parole board resigned because there had been some criticism about release of some individuals who then reoffended in a very serious way, committing several murders. Because of the widespread criticism of the board, I gather the chair felt it was appropriate to leave the position.

As you know, certainly there was a great deal of concern about the release of Mr Suzack and subsequent events. I guess if you draw an analogy between what's happened federally and this incident at the provincial level, why do you feel that you should be treated in a different way? You talked about accountability. Where does the buck stop in terms of these kinds of end results if the public is left in the dark in respect to what may have occurred within the ministry or within the parole board? We've been told absolutely nothing, and what you're telling us today is, in effect, absolutely nothing in terms of specifics that may have resulted from the internal review and the charges that were laid against Mr Suzack.

I guess I'm asking you to justify why you believe that you should be acting differently or treated differently than the chair of the federal parole board.

**Mr Wadel:** I think two things: One is, I believe that the board and I, as chair, should be evaluated on our success in meeting the mandate of the board, which is contributing to the protection of the community. I know we have taken steps now, through this management information system, to report very specifically on the incidents where people can complete their periods of parole, as well as where they're revoked; in what cases they're revoked for a technical reason, which is managing the case well in the community, versus reasons that are unsuccessful, where they're reoffending.

I think if you look at any particular decision, there are so many factors and influences involved in that decision. It could include the quality and content of information that's available to the members, the rigour of the process that occurred, but also, in the community, the type and degree of supervision, the services that were available to that person. So any particular decision and, even more so, any particular outcome are the result of really wide-ranging factors. I think it would be too simplistic to look



at the accountability that you're talking about.

I think what we have to do is, every quorum now of the board is subject to, and has been for years, random reviews where we examine on a regular basis the ability of the quorum to work within the procedures that govern any hearing. We look at the content, the quality of information available to those members, and we look at how well they incorporate that information to make the difficult decision of what's an acceptable risk. There are so many factors.

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We are taking steps, in terms of accountability, to review those cases, to ensure that training is improved on an ongoing basis, to ensure that the quality of information is improved on an ongoing basis and to ensure that we incorporate any developing knowledge about ability to predict risk into our practices. I think the way we should be judged on is, overall, what basically the success level is in parole decision-making.

**Mr Runciman:** I suppose in a general way that's fair, but I think when you have situations like this particular one that just scream out for answers—you talked about your system having been in place for years. That's not providing any solace to the people in Sudbury. You say, "What's unacceptable risk?" Again, I'm only looking at this from a perspective of having very limited information available to me as a member of the Legislature, let alone as a member of the public, but I've been advised after the shooting—for example, I've been contacted by the police in Sault Ste Marie indicating that they'd written to you saying that Suzack posed a menace to society, along with an outstanding warrant, along with a number of other issues. It just leaves one shaking their head in respect to how in the world this kind of guy could be released out onto the street.

You talk about an unacceptable risk. If you have a police force telling you that this guy is a menace to society, how the hell do you define an unacceptable risk to society? Those are the kinds of answers we'd like to have. You can talk in generalities, and I gather you've been restricted, for who knows what reasons, in terms of addressing the specifics of this case, but I think when we talk about you having that kind of a message before your adjudicators, God, I don't know how many of us could accept you saying: "We decided in wise counsel amongst this quorum that this guy posed an acceptable risk to society. There was an outstanding warrant which dealt with a violent crime in Alberta, plus the police saying he posed a menace to society, but we think this is an acceptable risk."

I don't think too many people would agree with you. We'd be interested in knowing how you can reach those kinds of conclusions, given the information in front of you. I think in an instance like that—and maybe this is being unfair, looking at one case in isolation, but it's a case that may have, and I emphasize "may have," resulted in a death. That has to come back and fall upon your shoulders. Somebody has to be accountable for that kind of a decision.

I guess there's not an awful lot more you can say. Thanks.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** You're completing your—

**Mr Runciman:** No, I'm not. I'd like to talk to Dr Humphries as well, if I still have some time.

**The Vice-Chair:** You have about 20 minutes.

**Mr Runciman:** Dr Humphries, welcome back. I don't know if you're really the person to answer the question or questions I have for you or not, but there may be advice coming from other quarters.

I'm interested in pursuing the Camp Dufferin situation and the fact that there are young offenders who may have been infected with the AIDS virus. What's happening in respect to that? I've been advised that there's some concern that there is not the effort being made to locate something like 84 former inmates about whom there's some concern about them being infected, that there's really not the concerted effort to locate these individuals, as might be expected. I know that falls into Dr Schabas's area, but I'm just wondering what you can tell us about that situation.

**Dr Paul Humphries:** I'd be happy to, Mr Runciman. The information was brought to our attention from the London Police Force on a Friday that an individual who was part of a pornographic ring there had indicated that he was HIV-positive, that he'd been at Camp Dufferin and that he'd been involved in tattooing with some of the other residents there. On that Friday we went into motion and started to identify everyone who would have been at the camp at the same time as that young offender was. That was leading into a weekend, and by the following Wednesday we could identify 84 possible people who had been in contact. By Thursday, that had been moved over to the Ministry of Health, as is proper custom on our part.

We then, in addition to that, identified all the other institutions that resident had been in as part of his "criminal behaviour." I talked with my colleagues in Health, and we felt that we should interview that young man relating to the other institutions as well. We felt it would be better if they did the follow-up than if we did, because there is more trust with Health than with the correctional side of it.

It's my understanding that they went in and once again talked with him. They are doing the follow-up. When I checked with Health about a week ago and I talked with Dr Evelyn Wallace, they were still in the process of following the contacts.

**Mr Runciman:** Do you know how many of the 84 they've been able to locate and contact in this period of time?

**Dr Humphries:** I would be breaking a very real confidentiality to answer that, if that's okay.

**Mr Runciman:** Why would that be? I'm sorry.

**Dr Humphries:** Let me explain that. If one removes this from the Camp Dufferin situation, let's talk about the earlier days when the Ministry of Health was actively involved in following up on syphilis, gonorrhoea and things like that. What would happen is a person would be reported to them. They would start a very confidential process of following up on the contact, and then those

people would identify other contacts until eventually there would be a fair number of people you would be following up from the communicable disease point of view. Obviously, clients would not be prepared to share information if they knew that information was going to be shared. That process is very confidential.

**Mr Runciman:** I'm not asking you for names. I am asking you, out of 84 possible contacts, how many have been located and apprised to be tested. I've heard it is very few. It seems to me there should be significant concern about these people making additional contacts if indeed they are carriers. This is a problem that could mushroom, and there's been a rather noticeable lack—maybe this is unfair—of effort in terms of trying to locate these individuals and ensure that they are tested and that they're not passing on the virus if indeed they are infected. So it seems to me it should be a very significant priority.

I have difficulty with your indicating that you can't advise me how many people have been contacted. I don't see any question of confidentiality arising, other than the fact that if my source is correct that very few of these people have been contacted and there's really a minimal effort under way to locate them, I think people have a right to be concerned and have a right to know about it.

**Dr Humphries:** In following up on these contact persons, it would be turned over to the local public health unit. I can assure you that they have talked with the young individual. They have obtained one or more contact names and one or more public health units have been involved. I should not go beyond that.

**Mr Runciman:** That's essentially the information I heard, Mr Minister, and I think you should be concerned about this as well, that very few health units have been contacted in respect to this and very few individuals have been located. I don't know when this arose. How long is it now: four weeks, five weeks?

**Dr Humphries:** Approximately.

**Mr Runciman:** I don't think, in that period of time, the effort that's called for here has occurred. It's a good issue to raise in question period, I guess.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I have no doubt, Bob.

**Mr Runciman:** On the HIV, we talked about the mandatory testing issue the other day and you said you were not a supporter of mandatory testing because of the period of time that the virus takes to show up in the system. Aren't there jurisdictions now that are using new techniques whereby they can detect the virus within something like 48 hours? If you're in the institution, they don't have this time lag that you expressed concern about the other day.

**Dr Humphries:** Yes, I keep hearing about this as well and I hear it's coming from Japan and Southeast Asia countries etc, but I have not personally been able to get a real reading on it from a North American point of view. I've talked with Dr Calzavara, who did our big study. We've talked with Dr Carol Major, who's head of the epidemiological part of the provincial lab in Etobicoke, and I'm not aware of some kind of technology we could use at this time that would change the windows from the

six weeks to six months. I'm not suggesting it's not available, but I can't get a reading on it; I hear about it.

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**Mr Runciman:** Yes. If it is available, would that change your attitude in respect to mandatory testing?

**Dr Humphries:** It would sure alter how we would look at HIV and its presence and what's possible and what is not possible.

**Mr Runciman:** Is it possible to reserve my remaining time for the next rotation?

**The Vice-Chair:** Yes, I believe that's possible, Mr Runciman. So you would yield the floor. I turn now to the New Democratic caucus and Mr Duignan.

**Mr Noel Duignan (Halton North):** You know that when a crime is committed the fact that a process goes into place: The police hunt for the criminal, the criminal is caught and they work their way through the justice system. It's something like bolting the door after the horse has left the stable. What I would like to know is what your ministry is doing in terms of crime prevention.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** We've been doing a lot since the beginning of the term, actually, but particularly in the areas of crime prevention. In fact, a lot of that now is reflected in the initiative we're seeing with the federal government, which very much was pressure from local communities, local provincial governments, to initiate a federal crime prevention council to put together a crime prevention strategy, again because a piecemeal effort by any one ministry, any one part of society is not going to do the job. At numerous federal-provincial conferences, Ontario has committed itself to both those endeavours and worked with the federal ministers to make sure that comes about.

Locally, one of the key things that we've done recently, just a few weeks ago, was the announcement of a provincial weapons enforcement unit. That goes hand in hand with the gun amnesty that I also announced on behalf of the government, all in an effort to try to take guns out of society, knowing how much they play a role, particularly in violent crime.

We have Crime Prevention Ontario, which is an umbrella group within the province that endeavours to bring all of the players together. One of, if not the key, financial backers of Crime Prevention Ontario is the Ontario government.

The Attorney General has initiated actions with regard to designating dangerous offenders in an attempt to ensure that for those who, quite frankly, even if their sentences are completed, should not be on our streets, there's an opportunity legally to do something about that. In fact, it's interesting to note that the federal Justice minister has said at federal-provincial-territorial justice ministers' conferences that if every other province used dangerous offender applications to the same degree that Ontario did, they wouldn't need to look at some of the changes they have to federally. That's as a result of a proactive measure on the part of our Attorney General.

That same Attorney General has also sent out directives to crown attorneys to seek stiffer sentences where weapons are used in the commission of an offence, again



to recognize that there's a greater threat to society when we're dealing with any kind of crime that involves a weapon, particularly a handgun.

My own ministry since last fall has been actively working on a public safety-violent crime project which is developing a series of standards for police services across Ontario to assist them in crime prevention and, in terms of carrying out their duties, in seeking out those who have committed offences so that we're doing that using the best practices possible and also that again we have a consistent approach right across the entire province. We've seen our Education minister put forward a very comprehensive package of zero tolerance of violence within our schools. Our government, as you know, has taken a strong line on fighting racism in society, to reduce the tensions that exist, again in an attempt to provide the kind of communities we want.

We've dramatically increased our funding to rape crisis centres and sexual assault centres, some of that coming after the fact, but in many ways preventing further assaults on individuals and on families. We've put out standards on domestic assault and sexual assault and hate bias crimes. All of these things are geared to try to deal with the specifics and within the criminal justice system as it exists, but also to try and get at the root causes of crime, so that indeed, as you put it, we aren't just chasing the horse after we've closed the barn door.

**Mr Duignan:** Also in the area of crime prevention, cooperation between the various jurisdictions could be with other provincial governments and with the federal government, and indeed between other police forces. There was an incident recently where something happened to me on the 401. I got off the 401. I was lucky enough to see a police cruiser. I flagged it down. "It's got nothing to do with me. You have to go and find the nearest OPP station and report it there." I still see that lack of coordination. That's still not quite 100% there. What are you doing to address that particular issue?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** If I can pick up on that, one of the key things that I've learned in my time in this ministry is on the whole issue of jurisdiction. We're seeing it again with the concern around children involved in pornography, where we're going beyond the boundaries of one particular jurisdiction but there is case after case to show where the technologies that are involved, the amount of sophisticated expertise that needs to be brought to a lot of cases, may be beyond one particular police service but a neighbouring one has that expertise. More and more, we're working towards trying to see that kind of a cooperative effort.

Police services have very much been standalone. They've seen their turf and not beyond it and have been very protective of that. Police chiefs have talked to me about the need to have protocols and arrangements that allow us to have the kind of cooperation that needs to exist in modern-day policing.

**Mr Duignan:** Finally, before I go on to my colleague, on the whole question of the new weapons units, I'm not quite sure how that will work and how it will address the problem of violent crime in Ontario. Maybe you could expand on that a little.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I was very pleased that we were able to provide the kind of leadership that I think this government is committed to in fighting crime. We worked with the police chiefs, particularly the intelligence branches, to determine some of the key areas we can focus on. Based on a previous project codenamed Gun-runner, there was a recommendation that indeed such a unit be created in the province. That's where we took our lead.

What we will do is strike a standalone, independent unit that is dedicated to gathering intelligence and determining where the networks are that are smuggling guns into Ontario as well as existing networks. One of the things about smuggling guns that we need to be aware of is that if you smuggle cigarettes or booze or drugs or other commodities, they're used once and they're gone. Guns, once smuggled into our province, can circulate for decades, wreaking all kinds of havoc. There's a real need to deal with the guns that are coming across the border as well as the networks within our province that see the guns being moved around and being purchased, unfortunately much more easily than the police and this government would like to see.

The whole purpose of this is to provide a standalone, dedicated unit that would gather all of the intelligence that's necessary to determine where these linkages are and then to be able to disrupt those linkages, arrest the individuals and, at the same time, strangle the flow of illegal weapons into Ontario, begin to do what we can to remove the guns, particularly handguns, which are the ones that cause some of the greatest damage.

I was very pleased that at the news conference the commissioner of the OPP—and it will be guided by the OPP—was present for the launching of that new unit. So was Chief McCormack of Metro Toronto as well as Chief Bob Middaugh, who is the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

There's been solid buy-in from across the province, from every police service I've talked to, to be a part of this, to be supportive of it and to make sure that it's a success and do everything we can to take these illegal weapons that are doing so much damage off our streets.

**Mr Derek Fletcher (Guelph):** My questions perhaps should go to the chair of the board of parole. Is that person here?

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Fletcher, you have about two minutes to ask your question.

1620

**Mr Fletcher:** Okay, maybe I'll put them all into one, then. I have about three questions.

The minister was talking about safe streets. Recently—well, more than just recently—there has been a lot of talk about people being released. I'm just wondering: When a person is on the parole board or is on the board, do they get trained as far as anything—they don't just come off the street and all of a sudden start making decisions, do they, about who can get out and who can't?

**Mr Wadel:** No. There's extensive training before any board member becomes actively involved in any release decision. That training includes orientation at the regional



office in terms of role and responsibilities, and then it includes, at the centralized Bell Cairn Staff Training and Development College, at least eight days of intensive training, which includes case preparation, decision-making, and interviewing skills. It also includes a hearing workshop for hearing chairs, and again there's a concentration on their specific roles and responsibilities, how one formulates and assesses risk.

**Mr Fletcher:** Okay. Someone's before the board. What kind of information does the board consider when it's making a decision whether or not to grant parole? Is it just good behaviour?

**Mr Wadel:** No. The key decision that has to be made at any hearing is to assess risk of reoffending. There's core information that's required before we'll proceed with any hearing, and we get that core information from three main sources.

One is the police. We're very interested in criminal history and any specific information about the offence that the person's been convicted of, as well as any outstanding criminal matters. So that's one core package of information.

From the institutional side, we want to know about the risk-need assessment that's been made by institutional staff. We want to know what the institutional behaviour has been like. We want to know what steps they've taken to address the identified risks and needs through community programs. So that constitutes another core of information.

Then, very importantly, we have a community report. The community report includes any information in terms of previous supervision in the community. It includes an assessment of the types of supports available in the community, such as employment opportunities and so on. It also includes recommendations in terms of what specific types of treatment would be required to appropriately supervise and manage that case in the community.

**Mr Fletcher:** Success rate: How many are going back in and how many are being offenders once they get out?

**Mr Wadel:** In our current annual report, 84% of offenders to whom we've granted release complete the parole period. Of the 16% who haven't completed it, half are returned because they violated a condition of release. So they're being managed and supervised in the community, and if they fail to abide by a curfew or they drink when they have an abstinence to drink or they don't attend treatment, they're brought back in. That's about half of that 16%—more than half, in fact. In less than half it's new criminal behaviour.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Mr Wadel. In the absence of the Liberal caucus, Mr Runciman has 13 minutes remaining, if he would care to continue.

**Mr Runciman:** Minister, I just wanted to ask you a bit about Project P. What kind of budget does Project P have on an annual basis? Does Project P fall under your ministry through the OPP?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Yes, Project P is a permanent unit to fight illegal pornography. It's a standalone unit that's been around since 1970-something—

**Mr Runciman:** It's been a while.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'm also waiting to get some information up here in terms of details of budgets and things, as much as I can give you.

**Mr Runciman:** In terms of manpower and dollars that are budgeted annually?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'm just waiting for those figures.

**Mr Runciman:** Okay. Maybe while we're waiting we could talk a little bit about your meeting in London this morning. I'm just wondering if you're looking at what's happened in London and drawing an analogy with the Prescott situation and Project Jericho, which laid out a plan in terms of how to deal with child sexual abuse. Are you going to use the Prescott situation as a model in terms of what's happened in London?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** As you know, the meeting was to sit down and take a look at what is the scope of the problem. There were OPP officials, ministry officials, the London police. The questions you're asking are quite valid, and I can understand you asking them; unfortunately, they come before the recommendations come to me. That was the purpose of the meeting, and then ministry officials will put the proposal in front of me. I've had a very quick briefing, kind of while I'm walking, hearing what's come out of the meeting. I need to get a fuller briefing.

I would think, and I'm speculating now, that obviously there would be a tie-in with our Project P as well as the London police. The media continues, as you know, to use the term "task force." In policing circles it's known as a joint forces operation. Some of these, as I've said before, are well known to the public; others are not, others are undercover operations.

The purpose of joint forces operation is numerous, the obvious one of course being to ensure that the kind of assistance Chief Fantino was seeking, where he needs resources over and above what he can provide, as well as linkages with other jurisdictions—this provides the vehicle to do that, rather than everybody re-creating on an ad hoc basis: How does London contact Metro? How does Metro link in and loop up Hamilton-Wentworth and others? There are established procedures for putting in place a joint forces operation which spell all these things out, and then we make sure, as a government, that the resources that are needed are there for the operation.

**Mr Runciman:** Are you looking at this purely from a policing perspective? Was there any involvement of Comsoc, children's aid? Was there any concern in terms of these discussions about how we deal with the victims, or was this simply policing: How do we lay charges and get these people off the street?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** As you know, my primary responsibility in the government is the policing end of it, and then at the other end too after the courts have done their business, but in an issue like this, where there may be minors involved, the need to bring in other ministries will be a part of our considerations.

It's still very early days. There is not a province-wide game plan in place. The detailed recommendations aren't in front of me; they're still being developed. At the point

the police have their recommendations for me, I will be looking at that with my colleagues in the cabinet to make determinations on where and to what degree we should bring in other ministries, and that may happen at different points along the way.

The answer to your question is that yes, if it's necessary, that's what we'll do, and to make a determination on the definition of "necessary," I will be apprising my colleagues in areas that I think they need to be aware of and where there may be a role for their ministry to assist in the police activities.

**Mr Runciman:** What about Project P? Do you have that information now?

**Ms Noble:** We don't have the specific budgetary detail broken down in terms of the individual units of the OPP. Staff have just left the room to see whether that's available, and we'll bring it back here if we have it before the end of the meeting.

1630

**Mr Runciman:** If you don't have it—I have to go up and participate in the debate—you can provide me with that information. I'd like to know the numbers and the annual budget. I'm just wondering, Minister, whether you have a feel for whether the numbers are adequate. I'm not basing this just on the London story, but I remember that a few months ago there was a significant series of stories in the *Toronto Star*, I think it was, with people identifying Toronto as the North American centre for the production of child porn. Clearly, if that was accurate, it's a significant problem in Ontario. Some of the comments I've seen, by at least one officer in Project P, is that they just don't have what's required to do an adequate job. I'd be interested in whether you have any feeling about that subject.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I would answer it this way: The fact that there's a standalone unit with dedicated officers committed to this issue only, given the myriad issues out there, is an indication of the support we've shown to this. I don't think I'm able to take credit for creating it. I think it was done by one of the previous governments.

**Ms Noble:** It was created in the 1970s.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** There you go, Bob. Your government can take credit for creating it, and we've continued to provide the support to it. I have not had representation made to me by officers from the intelligence community that they're not able to do the job at hand. You can pick any area of government these days and there's always a need and they could use more money, but I do think they've been given adequate resources.

The key now is that there's a clear path. There is evidence coming out of London that we need to have a concerted effort, and that's what we're acting on now. If it's a question of resources, then I'll be answering to you and everyone else as to whether or not we've provided those resources.

**Mr Runciman:** I'd just like to compare the resources, as we don't know what that is right at the moment, in Project P versus what hopefully you'll have a handle on:

the program where you've involved Metro and others in the gunrunning problem. What has the province budgeted for that? Do you have a figure on that?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** We're not releasing the dollar figures, as you know. It's not done when these kinds of activities are undertaken. There will be a core complement of 24 officers. I expect that will fluctuate to even higher numbers at some time during the course of events, given the involvement of other police services. Chiefs have committed to provide whatever resources are needed if the unit finds itself working within their jurisdiction, but there will be a core of 24.

**Mr Runciman:** Have they committed enthusiastically?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** As far as I can tell. Yes, I would say they are very enthusiastic. They see this as a serious issue—

**Mr Runciman:** Certainly it's a serious issue.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** —because, as you know, it's not just public safety; we're also talking about officer safety. Many times it's police officers who are the ones who are face to face with individuals using illegal weapons, particularly handguns. My sense, in moving around the province, is that this is being welcomed not just by the senior officers of police services but by the cops on the street, who see this as a response to an issue they're very concerned about as they go about their job.

**Mr Runciman:** In this squad, or whatever you call it, group, have you drawn officers from the Metro intelligence squad? Have they been seconded for this?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** There will be officers seconded from most of the major police services.

**Mr Runciman:** These are people from specific ethnic backgrounds?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Who is selected is the choice of the operation officers, not for me to make, but Metro has committed, as have the other major police services, to assign people on a seconded basis to the full-time unit. I'll leave it up to the police officers responsible to make the decisions on who best should be assigned.

**Mr Runciman:** Just one quick question about photo-radar. I forget the figure off the top of my head, but it was something like \$75 million that the Treasurer projected in terms of revenue in the remainder of the fiscal year; something like that, \$70 million, \$75 million. Did you make any representations in terms of the revenues that were going to be derived from photo-radar? As the top cop and the guy around the cabinet table who is representing the interests of police officers and policing, did you make any effort to see that those revenues would be dedicated revenues?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I don't think there's a minister around that table who hasn't taken a run at the consolidated revenue fund at one time or another. The fact is that the money is clearly dedicated to the consolidated revenue fund, and there is no way of changing that, barring changes to legislation.

**Mr Runciman:** You're avoiding my question. I think this is an argument you could have made, and should have made if you didn't, because these are normally offences that would have been captured by a police



officer or officers. You, as well as anyone, have to be very much aware of the growing public concern with respect to law-and-order issues and very much aware of the tough time getting adequate resources to provide the needs that people are calling out for in this province.

It seems to me that if there is one where you should've been banging your fist around the cabinet table in terms of dedicated revenues, this is it. Did you make that case? I don't want these general statements that everybody goes after the consolidated revenue fund. I asked you a specific question. Did you make the case to have these revenues dedicated to police resources in the province?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I wasn't trivializing your question. I was saying that the answer to the question, very directly, is that the money from traffic offences, fines, goes to the consolidated revenue fund. Short of saying that we should change the entire structure, there's nothing that can be done about that. Did I recommend we change the entire structure? No, I didn't.

But let me say this about police officers, and this is something that we did talk about and that I did advocate. The new computer equipment that's coming into the patrol cars is being very much welcomed by the officers. The fact that officers won't, in the middle of the night, any longer have to go up to cars pulled off to the side of the road and stick their hands inside a car window is very much appreciated by officers. The fact that we're able to redeploy officers from highway patrol in terms of speeding and redeploy them to other activities, including crime prevention, is very much welcomed by police officers. This whole issue is one the police community is very much eager to see launched.

**Mr Tim Murphy (St George-St David):** I wanted to ask the minister about the ammunition bill. We are discussing it upstairs indirectly, and occasionally directly, in fact. You've now had some time to sit back and consider it. I have talked with a number of chiefs of police who've indicated support for the concept, from Brant to Sturgeon Falls to Toronto. What I'm wondering is whether you would or would not commit to bringing forward this bill or a similar bill before we have an election.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Two answers to that. One is that I've already stated on behalf of the government that the issue of more responsible control over the sale and accessibility of ammunition is something we support. There's no question of that. The issue now is, how best should that happen and who will do it? My understanding is that the intent of the legislative committee is to make some of those determinations, and that's why they have a list of experts who are coming.

I don't want to pre-empt the legitimate discussions they're having, and I mean this very sincerely. I don't want to pre-empt that, because if I sit here and say to you, "We're going to bring in legislation and that's that," then why are you bothering to go upstairs and talk about it? Why are you bothering to listen to lawyers give you advice on who has the constitutional responsibility? The fact is that we're prepared to do it if need be.

There is a legitimate question about whether the federal government really has sole ability to do it or

whether we can. The other thing is, if we get a signal from the federal government that it's going to do this and going to do it quickly, it doesn't make a lot of sense for provinces on their own to start putting in a patchwork type of series of regulations and laws that may be changed by federal action.

1640

**Mr Murphy:** We can argue back and forth, but the provinces can show leadership occasionally by doing things independently of the federal government. There is a history in a series of fields, from drugs to tobacco, of joint administration within a field. We have already had two constitutional experts, including one as renowned as Professor Peter Hogg, say that yes, the province can do it, and in terms of what we are doing upstairs, a commitment to doing it does not preclude the appropriate examination in committee of how best, where best etc. So I'm not sure I accept your arguments for not giving a straightforward yes or no.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Let me respond to what you just said. I was not attempting to dodge this at all. I've stated very clearly that the government is in support of the initiative. As to the question of showing some leadership, I don't think it's great leadership for us to put the very, very limited and scarce resources of this government, through our staff people, working on an issue on which the federal government's going to step in a month or two later and impose its will on how this ought to be done. That's not good government in tight times, in my mind.

Really, what we have a question of is: Are the feds prepared to move, and if they aren't, what are our options? If they are going to, when are they going to do it? If that's acceptable in terms of a time line, we ought to support them in their efforts and urge them to do it as quickly as possible. If they're not going to do it, then what will be coming in front of the Legislature are the means that we see available to us.

**Mr Murphy:** We had in—I forget the name of the office, but in essence the firearms office, the CPFO.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Henry Vanwyk, the chief provincial firearms officer.

**Mr Murphy:** One of the concerns I had was that in 1994 they are not going to be able to visit and inspect all the places that sell ammunition and firearms in the province. There are two reasons for that: One is an increase in duties, but also the social contract being passed. What are your plans for making sure that all those 1,020 or 1,200 institutions that sell firearms and ammunition under the provisions that allow them to do so in the Criminal Code are going to be visited and inspected this year?

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I can't give you a commitment that every one will be inspected this year. I am in regular contact, as you can appreciate, with the chief provincial firearms officer all throughout our discussions about weapons and ammunition, as well as in the conversion from the .38 calibre revolvers to the 9mm and .40 calibre pistols. I know his office has had a great deal of increase in its workload, not just because of the social



contract, although that's an implication in many places, but simply because of the demands coming from my office alone in terms of the resources I've demanded of him as I'm dealing with this serious issue of public safety.

I look forward to the results of the committee recommendations. I don't think—well, you tell me, more accurately, but I don't think you and the Tories are going into this with the intent to be unreasonable and pie-in-the-sky about the way the world ought to be, particularly at a time when you're also advocating that there be constraints in public spending and that we need to keep an eye on our budget lines. So I'm very much looking forward to receiving the recommendations that say where we ought to be increasing any inspections, if that's relevant to the issue of ammunition.

**Mr Murphy:** If we want to be political about it, we can be. But the bottom line, it strikes me, is that if you are going to be serious about the words you're using, it's going to require, at the minimum, even if we aren't going to do any further regulation, inspection once a year of those places that sell firearms and ammunition. They told me clearly that is not going to happen this year. I'm asking, in the context of an environment where I think all of us recognize a public desire for action on these issues, how you're going to make sure that's going to happen.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I'll be frank with you. I'm not sure whether it's mandatory or whether it's best practice that they be inspected. If it's best practice, obviously we'll do the very best we can with whatever is available. If it's mandatory, we're going to have to visit that to ensure that we're meeting our obligations under the law. If you know, or anybody else, that's fine.

**Mr Murphy:** I can tell you that there's a significant drop in the number of inspections expected from last year to this year, at a time when there is at least a perception, and I think a reality, of increased crime involving weapons.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** Again, I would say to you that would be part of a—

**Mr Murphy:** Regardless of whether it's mandatory or not.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** I hear you, but what I see is that we need to be looking at ammunition, and not just the ammunition alone. If we're going to ask the feds to revisit the issue of control under the explosive weapons act—I believe it's the proper legislation—then maybe there's a whole host of other measures we ought to be looking at.

When you say to me, am I going to do what's necessary to make sure that we're doing the job we should? the answer is yes. If you're asking me exactly what those details are today, no, I don't have them. I see that as part and parcel of our collective effort to try to come to grips with the availability and the accessibility of ammunition, as well as weapons in general. I think quite frankly everything, provincially and federally, is on the table for review.

Let me also say that I have a great deal of confidence in the expertise of the chief firearms officer for Ontario.

I have no doubt that the measures that need to be taken will be taken.

**Mr Murphy:** It's not a question of questioning the chief firearms officer's expertise at all; it's a question of having the resources to do the job no matter how expert you are.

I want to move on. You have kindly provided me with a written response to a question regarding the social contract impact on policing, and I want to follow up. I'm going to do so by way of an example that's in my community: 51 Division, which is a very busy division in Metropolitan Toronto, encompasses a fair part of my riding. They have a normal complement of a foot patrol allocation of 24 officers and are down to 16, for which I am told quite clearly that the responsibility lies in the social contract. They have also been squeezed in a variety of areas. In the allocation of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force in general, they are down from their unit strength by more than 500 police officers, when the largest division I think in Metropolitan Toronto has fewer than 500 police officers. So it's a significant amount.

While you say there have been no massive layoffs, my real question is related to the impact of the social contract on safety in communities, not how you got to achieve savings to the extent that savings were achieved, but the police are telling me quite clearly that they aren't able to do as good a job in communities because of the impact of the social contract. What I want to know specifically is what you are doing as minister and what the ministry is doing to monitor that impact.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** We have a policing services division whose responsibility within the ministry is to provide me with information on what is happening in the various police services across the province as it relates to this issue and all the other issues that we're responsible for, as well as reversing the information flow so that the services are also receiving things they need to know from us.

I would point out to you, though, to put things in context, that you can't have it both ways, Tim. When we're talking about controlling the deficit and we're talking about controlling expenditures, one can't get up one day, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and preach about constraint and responsible spending, and then get up on alternate days of the week and talk about needing more money here, here and here. We have approached the social contract, budgetary constraints, taxes in general in a way we think is balanced and measured. You want to nod your head up and down. You don't want to acknowledge all that. I know it's nice and easy not to.

**Mr Murphy:** That's irrelevant to the debate.

**Hon Mr Christopherson:** It is entirely relevant.

**The Chair:** This sounds even better as a debate in the House, but in the interests of time, I'd like to finish on this wonderfully high note.

**Mr Gordon Mills (Durham East):** How can you say it's irrelevant?

**Mr Murphy:** It's just rhetoric. I want an answer to the question.

**The Chair:** It is estimates and the time is used

accordingly in the way members see fit.

**Mr Murphy:** The people in my riding don't want to hear this kind of stuff. They want to hear an answer to how they are going to live on a daily basis, when 460 weapons offences in six months in one division—

**The Chair:** I'd like to bring everybody back to our agenda. Because we're a time-sensitive committee, I'm afraid we must call the vote momentarily. I apologize for the interjection, but I wanted to bring some order to that and got myself engaged in a debate. I'm sorry.

**Mr Mills:** I live in his riding and I'm quite happy with the police protection.

**Mr Murphy:** And the representation too, I hear.

**Mr Mills:** It keeps me awake with the all the sirens.

**Mr Murphy:** He's always whining to me for more service too.

**The Chair:** If we could proceed at this time, I have several votes to conduct. If I have agreement from the committee, I'd like to proceed with those votes.

We have almost completed the time allocation, but since we are going to be starting the Ministry of Health estimates in a few minutes, I thought it best that we call the vote at this time.

Shall vote 2801 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall vote 2802 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 2803 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 2804 be approved? All in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall vote 2805 be approved? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall the 1994-95 estimates of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services be approved? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Shall the estimates of this ministry be reported to the House? All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

I would like to thank the ministry staff who have been in attendance and the committee members for this round of estimates.

This committee will take a four-minute recess. I would ask the members to return so we can commence the estimates of the Ministry of Health.

*The committee recessed from 1652 to 1708.*

#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair:** I'd like to reconvene the standing committee on estimates. We're here to do nine hours of the Ministry of Health. We're pleased to welcome the Honourable Ruth Grier, minister.

Minister, according to our standing orders you have up to 30 minutes for your opening statement and then the Chair will recognize Mrs Sullivan, the Health critic for the Liberal Party. Please proceed, Minister.

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** Thank you, Mr Chair. I'm pleased to be back again. I think this is my second time as Minister of Health to defend my estimates. Whatever ministry I'm in seems to be the one that

is chosen for estimates, and I really enjoy the opportunity of discussing and questioning. I look forward to our time here.

As I appear for the second time, to present the 1994-95 estimates of Health, I look forward to discussing both the dramatic and the substantive changes that have been taking place as we improve our health care system. It's now been two and a half years since my ministry announced a health restructuring agenda designed to ensure more efficient use of scarce resources and to shift the emphasis from treatment to health promotion and disease prevention. Much hard work has been done since then.

Since I first appeared before this committee in July 1993, we have had a new cancer strategy in Ontario. We are working to meet the special needs of people with kidney disease, diabetes and acquired brain injury. We have a more efficient hospital sector. We have a health system that is less open to fraudulent abuse. We have a plan for long-term care that responds to the needs of seniors and those with physical disabilities, and a plan for mental health services that puts people first.

We have innovative approaches to meeting the health needs of individuals in their communities, approaches that include the use of nurse practitioners, midwives and birthing centres. We have programs that stress good health and disease prevention, such as our tobacco strategy and our program for vaccinating pre-teens against hepatitis B.

I am very proud of these accomplishments and I am proud that Ontario has been a trailblazer in the area of health care restructuring. We've only to look beyond our own situation and our borders to see that others are far behind us in grappling with the many problems inherent to modern health systems.

Over the past couple of years, we've written much of the book on paring back an overgrown health care system with a minimal amount of pain. A possible title of such a book could be *How to Improve Health Care Without Spending More Money*. But it's a book that has had several authors. It's the result of a collaborative effort, a partnership led by district and local health planners, including health care providers, hospital administrators, the public, unions and planners from the ministry.

I've been particularly pleased by the way that people from all sectors of health care have embraced the idea that change is necessary, indeed inevitable, and have risen to the challenge of coming up with new and better approaches for getting things done.

A vivid example of this comes from our hospital sector, which has been going through a period of intense restructuring. The results are now coming in, results that could not have come about without consultation and cooperation among all the concerned players.

There is a Collingwood newspaper that I know my critic from the third party will be familiar with that said on page 1 a couple of weeks ago, quoting Ontario Hospital Association President Dennis Timbrell, who is of course one of the key players in restructuring: "On the national scene, only Ontario and Manitoba still put faith



in local governments' operation of health care. Other provinces have taken central control and abolished local boards. They have absolute central control, but there is no evidence that this improves the quality of health care or cost-effectiveness."

It's good to hear such comments because it reinforces the fact that we're on the right track. Indeed, I believe that our emphasis on involving the health community at all levels throughout the restructuring process has been key to our success. In particular, district health councils throughout Ontario have been playing a key role in making hospitals more efficient and more cost-effective.

Windsor-Essex is a prime example of where the district health council took the role of lead planner. It recently completed two years of work in designing a new hospital system, one that improves efficiency while maintaining jobs and services. Not only did they redesign the hospital system; they recognized that they couldn't do that without redesigning and reconfiguring their entire health services system. With less duplication, there are economies of scale that free up literally millions of dollars to spend on prevention, detection and other needed local health care services.

Look at Doctors Hospital here in Metropolitan Toronto, another success story in the making. It was the first community hospital in Metro Toronto to undergo a major project review as part of our province-wide review of capital projects. That was two years ago. Doctors Hospital is now being redeveloped as a state-of-the-art, comprehensive ambulatory care facility, one of the first of its kind in North America.

Perhaps most exciting about this is the fact that the voices of 1,300 people, representing a wide variety of community interests, were listened to before the Doctors Hospital redevelopment plan was drafted. I'm sure that all those who participated in the consultations will be very proud when the new facility is completed in a few years' time.

We have been working with hospitals to come up with other innovative approaches for cutting operating costs, and one of these has to do with the way that hospital supplies are purchased, distributed and stored. Through a ministry-funded study, we found that hospitals could save \$250 million, more than 20% of the \$1.1 billion spent on supplies each year, by improving their materials management systems. Much of this saving could be achieved simply through group buying, because Ontario hospitals represent one of the largest purchasing organizations in the world.

In another bid to have hospitals become more efficient, we recently announced \$7.8 million in funding for pilot projects that help minimize hospital stays and act as a bridge between hospital and community-based care. Included here are 20 quick-response teams covering more than 70 hospitals across the province which will receive \$5.4 million. These teams will help people entering an emergency department find the most appropriate care, which will often mean home care rather than being admitted to hospital.

The remaining \$2.4 million will go to four existing hospital-in-the-home projects. These projects provide

acute and palliative care at home, and mean the patients may be discharged earlier than in the past or may avoid hospital altogether. According to a recent evaluation of the hospital-in-the-home program, the costs are about 25% lower than in-hospital care, but even more importantly, patients and families say that they are very satisfied with the quality of care provided.

So, as can be seen, all this planning, coordination and cooperation is resulting in a new system of hospital care, one that keeps costs in check without compromising quality and one that is spreading across the province.

It remains a system where miracles can and do happen, such as the 20-hour operation that separated Siamese twins Margaret and Susana this past weekend at the Hospital for Sick Children. It was wonderful to know that our system is capable of conducting such state-of-the-art procedures, and it's heartwarming to know that compassion remains a cornerstone of our system. I can tell you that it made me feel very good when I read that the twins' father had thanked not only the doctors and the nurses who performed the amazing surgery on his daughters, but he also thanked the government and the taxpayers for paying for the operation.

Since the restructuring of our hospitals is well underway and well in hand, we were able this year to turn our attention to another part of the health care system, one that constitutes almost one third of the entire health budget. I'm talking, of course, about OHIP, where we reshaped the eligibility rules to save \$48 million and where we introduced a three-month waiting period for OHIP, a move designed to prevent people from returning to Ontario just to receive medical care.

Stamping out health fraud was something that we discussed at length when I appeared before this committee last year, and which is a priority for our ministry. I believe it's important for us to be equipped to investigate any misuse of the system, to crack down on medical fraud by providers and patients. An ex-RCMP officer who had been part of the Ministry of the Environment's enforcement and investigations branch was put in charge of our province's investigative unit, and we are adding to his capacity eight investigators.

These tough new measures are working. We discovered, for example, that over the past year 21 doctors had overbilled OHIP by \$1.4 million. All of them have been ordered to repay what they owe. We simply cannot afford to tolerate any abuse of the system if the system is to continue providing quality health care for Ontarians.

A new health card is another example of how we are tackling abuse head on. Security features on the new cards such as the cardholder's photograph, a magnetic strip containing cardholder eligibility information and a holographic overlay to prevent counterfeiting should prove to be strong deterrents against fraud.

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We are at the point now in the evolution of our Ontario health care where we can redirect and reinvest our health care dollars in new areas of care. While maintaining our institutional health framework is important, just as important is establishing a community-based



approach to health care, and while treating illness is important, just as important is health promotion.

I believe that we are on the right track in these areas and I believe that our system is improving without more money being spent on it.

As far as community-based care goes, we have made considerable progress this past year. While overall ministry spending has declined slightly, both this and last fiscal year, spending for community and public health continues to increase.

This meant that last year, for example, we were able to approve three new community health centres, and just last Friday I announced that four more would be approved in this fiscal year, which will bring the total number of community health centres in the province to 56. For 1994-95, spending on community and public health will increase by 5.3%, a reflection of our commitment to moving towards a more community-based approach to health care.

Our long-term care strategy is an excellent example of this. Ontario's social demographics are going through major changes. Seniors currently account for only 12% of the population. By the year 2010, however, census projections tell us that it will be a very different story. In less than 20 years, the number of seniors in Ontario will increase by 45% and the number of people over 85 will increase by almost 125%. At the same time, the long-term trend towards greater life expectancy for the general population and for people living with disease and disabilities will also continue to rise.

Ontario currently spends over \$2.1 billion for long-term care services. This includes institutional care, home care, the integrated homemaker program and other community support programs. But we are committed to moving away from institutional care and increasing the number of community-based services. In fact, over the next two years, we will be investing an additional \$199 million to expand community and in-home long-term care services.

The keystone of our new long-term care delivery system will be the multiservice agency or MSA. These will be local, volunteer-led, community-based agencies that offer people easy access to a variety of home care and support services close to their homes.

The local MSA will coordinate referral, assessment, evaluation and service delivery. And while the ministry has guidelines, we are leaving the exact design of each MSA up to district health councils. This way, they will be developed locally based on local needs and resources. As Dennis Timbrell in the quote that I had earlier mentioned said, developing locally based services based on local planning is unique in Ontario.

The MSA principle is to put people first, to ensure that they can make informed choices and that adequate and consistent services are available in all parts of the province.

Putting people first also lies at the heart of our strategy for helping people with mental illness. Here again we are working with district health councils to transform the current system of fragmented community-based services

into one that is strong and coordinated.

In many areas, the transformation has already started. The Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital, for example, now runs the Annex, a supportive housing program for people with schizophrenia. In other areas like Simcoe and Thunder Bay, mental health organizations have set up employment programs to help people live in the community and maintain their jobs.

Last January, we announced that more than \$1.2 million a year would go to 10 new supportive housing programs for people with serious mental illnesses, programs that enable people to live independently.

As we address the current and future needs of individuals and their communities, we find ourselves moving more towards a holistic form of medicine, one that relies on the skills of a wide variety of health care providers. While physicians will of course remain an integral part of the system, other health professionals will take on greater responsibility for patient care.

Midwives are among this new breed of care givers. I'm pleased to say that Ontario midwives have a rather special status that no other midwives in the country yet have. Our midwives are officially recognized, and they are being integrated into our regulated health system.

Midwifery services are now available in many communities and the demand for those services has been overwhelming. Midwives are obtaining hospital privileges and some will eventually find their way to one of the three freestanding birthing centres which we are spending \$2 million to set up—one in Toronto, one in St Jacobs and one in Sudbury. A fourth is being planned for the Nee-Gan O'Chee community in Fort Albany.

As I've said, physicians will remain an integral part of the health care system. So it's crucial that appropriate numbers of specialty physicians are available to communities throughout the province. In moving towards this goal, we will be looking to the work now being carried out by the Provincial Coordinating Committee on Community and Academic Health Science Relations, PCCCAR. I don't pretend to be able to rhyme off that acronym without having a note on what that lengthy title is. PCCCAR has three main objectives: to develop a comprehensive policy and planning framework for health human resources, one that is based on community needs; to examine the function and financing of academic health science centres; and to restructure Ontario's post-graduate medical education system.

On this last point, PCCCAR recently recommended that the ministry adopt a new management framework for post-graduate medical education. This framework, which they called the pool system, will enable the ministry, in concert with medical schools and teaching hospitals, to better manage the number and mix of new physicians eligible to practise in Ontario. This will mean that we will be in a better position to respond to population health needs.

This is the first time that the province has systematically approached the issue of health-human resource planning, and I think that it is a fundamental requirement of the kind of planning and the kind of decisions that we

will have to make in the future. Indeed, meeting the unique needs of communities across Ontario is itself a critical component of our health planning. Again, I would like to use the north as an example, as its needs are quite different from those of the rest of the province.

To meet those needs, we have set up a northern health programs and planning branch, with offices in Thunder Bay and in Sudbury. The mandate of this branch is to work with local health councils to help improve the delivery and the coordination of ministry programs and services in the north.

For some years now, one concern has been the northern health travel grant, the government program that helps northern residents who must travel for specialized care. Early this year, we made the program fairer and more efficient.

The ministry now pays travel costs based only on the distance between a person's home and the nearest appropriate specialist or designated health facility. People can still choose any specialist, but if there's a specialist closer to home who offers the same service, the grant will help cover only the distance to that specialist.

I believe that this reform will encourage people to use the excellent specialists already available in northern communities. It will also save money and encourage more specialists to practise and remain in the north. And, of course, it will mean more accessible health care for northern residents.

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The north is also where we established what I consider to be one of the most significant initiatives of this government: the Northern Diabetes Health Care Network.

Diabetes is the third leading cause of death by disease in Ontario. People with diabetes have twice the chance of having a heart attack or a stroke. Diabetes is the leading cause of adult blindness. It is an unfortunate reality that the incidence of diabetes is higher in the north than in the rest of the province. That is why the network is so very important, because for people with diabetes, it represents a precious chance to prevent the very serious potential complications of the disease.

As with all such initiatives, we listened to the people who will be using the service. The network was established through consultations with francophone, aboriginal and other community representatives. The result is that each of the 34 centres that are part of the \$5-million network is a home-town idea. Each centre offers programs that are planned in the community and for the community.

Diabetes is also a leading cause of kidney failure. So we have been planning and investing in services geared to the needs of people with kidney disease. Demand for end-stage renal disease services has been increasing by about 10% per year right across the province. To keep up with this, we just completed a three-phase, \$22-million expansion program for dialysis service. The aim was to bring service as close to home for as many kidney patients as possible.

In addition to the expansion program's basic funding of \$22 million, we added another \$27 million of life

support funding to hospital operating budgets for end-stage kidney disease services, and \$10.6 million has been spent on new equipment and renovation projects.

At the end of 1988, before the expansion started, there were 2,073 dialysis patients in Ontario. In December of last year, the number had risen to about 3,339 patients. That is an increase of 1,266 people now being served.

Because of all this additional spending on dialysis services, we can now treat 1,400 more patients than we could five years ago. And we have begun the work to enable us to plan to meet future needs, especially in central Ontario. Because the fact remains that never before have dialysis services been as available and as accessible, but we, at the same time, have to plan to meet the growing need in the future.

Our efforts to foster healthy communities are far-reaching and not limited to certain areas of the province. I want to talk a bit about what has been an innovative and multi-award-winning campaign to prevent young people from taking up the smoking habit. It is a province-wide campaign and it is part of our overall cancer strategy which includes the tough provisions of Bill 119, now before the committee of the whole House, as well as funding for education and enforcement officers to make sure that retailers are adhering to Bill 119's rules and not selling tobacco to young people under the age of 19.

Another health promotion initiative is our recently announced \$6-million program to vaccinate grade 7 students against hepatitis B, the sometimes fatal liver disease that affects more than 300 mostly young adults annually.

Our new health network, which will provide pharmacists with information about Ontario drug benefit program clients, will help prevent duplications or possible interactions with other medications. This is extremely important, because every year more than 17,000 Ontarians need medical treatment for prescription drug reactions, and about one out of five seniors in hospital is there because of a drug reaction.

The health network has already played a significant role in helping seniors. Let me tell you how it worked in one specific example, to save a 70-year-old Markham man from serious illness. He was taking a blood thinner for a heart valve problem. While visiting his daughter in Niagara Falls last month, his arthritis flared up and he went to a local clinic. He forgot to tell the doctor, whom he'd never met before, about his heart medication. The doctor, who didn't know his medical history, gave him a prescription for an ASA drug. But when he went to the drug store and the pharmacist entered the new prescription on the health network, the computer flashed a warning that the new drug would react with his heart medication. The pharmacist talked to the man and to the local doctor and arranged for an alternative medication.

That's precisely how the network is meant to work and how it is working. What would have happened without that warning? Possibly, for the patient, severe internal bleeding, leading to hospitalization; maybe worse. But because the health network was in place, the outcome was a happy one, just one of what I am sure will be many such outcomes in the years ahead.



We have also, of course, made changes this past year to the Ontario drug benefit program that will save money without compromising drug therapy for those covered by the plan. Among the cost-saving measures that we introduced are prescribing guidelines for anti-infective drugs, the addition of 46 new generic products to the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary, the addition of 24 new brand-name drugs at no additional cost to the system and no price increases in 1994 for drugs listed on the formulary.

We have also reviewed and subsequently delisted extended-release dosage products. These long-acting medications can be 10 times more expensive than their regular-dosage counterparts. As well, 134 over-the-counter drug products were removed from the formulary, but all are available at reasonable cost without a prescription and their removal will not have a negative effect on health outcomes.

We are all aware that there will always be certain diseases and medical conditions that require specialized treatment and care. Diseases such as cancer and conditions such as acquired brain injury cannot always be prevented. Consequently, it is important that our health care system is equipped to meet the current and future needs of people facing such health crises.

In April, I had the privilege of announcing Ontario's first comprehensive cancer strategy, born out of our discussions with 600 people who told us that while it is important to treat the disease, it is just as important to care for the person. Highlights of our cancer strategy include:

- The setting up of a provincial cancer network to help coordinate services into a seamless cancer care system, a system that includes everything from health promotion, prevention, early detection and treatment to support services and palliative care.

- Establishing a task force on primary prevention in cancer to look into the best ways of treating the disease.

- Providing services that meet each person's physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

In Ontario, we now spend more than \$1 billion a year on cancer care, and expanding cancer services is a priority for our government. So in spite of pressures to cut back on spending, we have put \$269 million towards expanding, building and renovating cancer centres. This includes \$185 million for the nearly completed Princess Margaret Hospital.

Let me say that I very much welcome the recent announcement by Princess Margaret Hospital and the Toronto Hospital which will see the two facilities working together to coordinate their cancer services. This fits perfectly into our strategy of creating a cancer network for Ontario.

This year, we will increase funding for cancer services by \$15 million to help plan regional services, expand the Toronto Bayview, Kingston and Ottawa regional cancer centres, and fund bone marrow transplants, breast-feeding programs and community support groups.

As members know, there have always been services for people with cancer in Ontario, but the same cannot be

said for those with acquired brain injury. Consequently, for many years people had to seek treatment in the United States, a situation which, I am pleased to say, is changing.

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Each year, as many as 15,000 Ontarians receive brain injuries that require hospital care. It only makes sense that the road to recovery for these people might be improved if treatment facilities were available close to home where they have the support of families and friends. That's why we are investing heavily in hospital and community service programs to help Ontarians with ABI.

For example, last summer we announced \$4.26 million to strengthen community-based behavioural programs in Hamilton, London, Kingston and Toronto; \$3.9 million has gone to the ABI program at Chedoke-McMaster Hospital, and a further \$2.85 million is being spent on community outreach and repatriation. In 1991, we spent \$4 million for 12 hospital and community projects across the province. In 1993, we awarded almost \$1 million to Thunder Bay and Sudbury for hospital ABI service improvements, and in March, Premier Rae announced \$2.1 million for a major expansion of rehabilitation services in Toronto for people with acquired brain injuries.

The progress that we're making in helping people with acquired brain injury is consistent with our overall strategy for health care in Ontario. That strategy is based on the notion that if we are to ensure the effectiveness of the system, we must plan and deliver services based on the needs of local people and the communities in which they live. Whether we succeed or fail will depend on the extent to which those needs are met, and while history will be the final judge of this, I believe we are succeeding.

As I said at the outset, it has been two and a half years since we introduced our health restructuring agenda. That agenda has been to ensure more efficient use of scarce resources and to shift the emphasis of our health care system from treating disease to preventing it.

What we are really talking about is an evolution of health care in this province. Evolution is a gradual process, one that takes time. While I think that we can acknowledge that part of this evolution was started by previous governments, and I do acknowledge that, it is clear that no previous government demonstrated the courage, the conviction and the resolution to make the substantial changes that we have, especially in the areas of cost containment and the introduction of major reforms.

Such changes have dramatically sped up Ontario's health care evolution. They have led to a system that is already better in tune with the needs of people in communities as diverse as Toronto and Dryden. They have produced a system that is well prepared to meet the needs of future Ontarians and the communities of tomorrow.

Our government has great faith in this new health system. Not only is it good for the health of Ontarians, but we believe it can also contribute to Ontario's good



economic health. Health industries are responding to the changes in the health care system, to the shift of patients from institutions to home and community settings, to the need for innovative health promotion programs and to the demand for cost-effective technologies. At the same time, international demand for a wide variety of health services is growing rapidly.

We want to help our health care industries bring their products and expertise to this burgeoning market. We are doing this by listening to the recommendations of such groups as the health industries advisory committee, which came up with a strategy for improving the competitiveness and accelerating the growth of our health industries. We are providing \$7.65 million to bring that strategy to light and to help give Ontario's health industry a boost. Industry leaders say that this investment could lead to 40,000 new jobs in the province by the year 2004, and I think the bottom line here is that if industry succeeds, we all succeed.

As a government, we're committed to getting Ontario back to work. We believe that making sure people have jobs and job security is a key factor in their personal health, the health of their families and the overall health of the communities in which they live. But such a state of health does not stop at employment. Ensuring people have access to decent housing and education and to a clean, safe environment are also important factors, and we have been working to include them in our formula for the health and wellness of Ontarians.

I'm very proud that what we are doing fits with the World Health Organization's definition of "health," that it is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and disability. Indeed, this definition, this philosophy, if you will, forms the foundation of our approach to ensuring the healthiest possible Ontario.

I'm sure that members of the committee will have comments and questions both on what I've said and on the issues that are of concern to them. I look forward to addressing them. There will be representatives of the ministry here to help me do this, as they have all of the information that I think anybody could think of asking for. We will certainly attempt to provide whatever is needed so the committee can have a constructive discussion of our estimates. I look forward to the response

from my critics in the opposition parties and to the questions that will follow.

**Mr Duignan:** I know it's not a point of order to applaud the minister for such a fine speech, but that's not my point of order. Seeing that there's less than 15 minutes left on the clock and there's an expected vote, I was wondering maybe if we could hold over the two opposition replies.

**The Vice-Chair:** Is there a consensus on the committee that we do that?

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** I'm quite willing to do that, as long as we're assured that we don't lose any time in the estimates process.

The other issue I wanted to raise as a point of order is that the estimates books were here very late this year. We got them late yesterday in my office.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm sorry. They were delivered to the House leaders and the opposition parties were informed they could be picked up early last week. We found a typo on a couple of pages and I asked to take them back and change that and we discovered that as of—when was it?—we went over to see if we could change the typo and none of them had been picked up, so we took them back, changed the typo and returned them to the House leader's office.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As soon as we heard that the Health estimates were going to be presented, we were in contact with our House leader's office and I finally got my copy of the book yesterday. I was speaking with Mr Wilson and the same thing occurred with him; he did not have a copy of the documentation until yesterday.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm sorry. They sat there for a week waiting to be picked up.

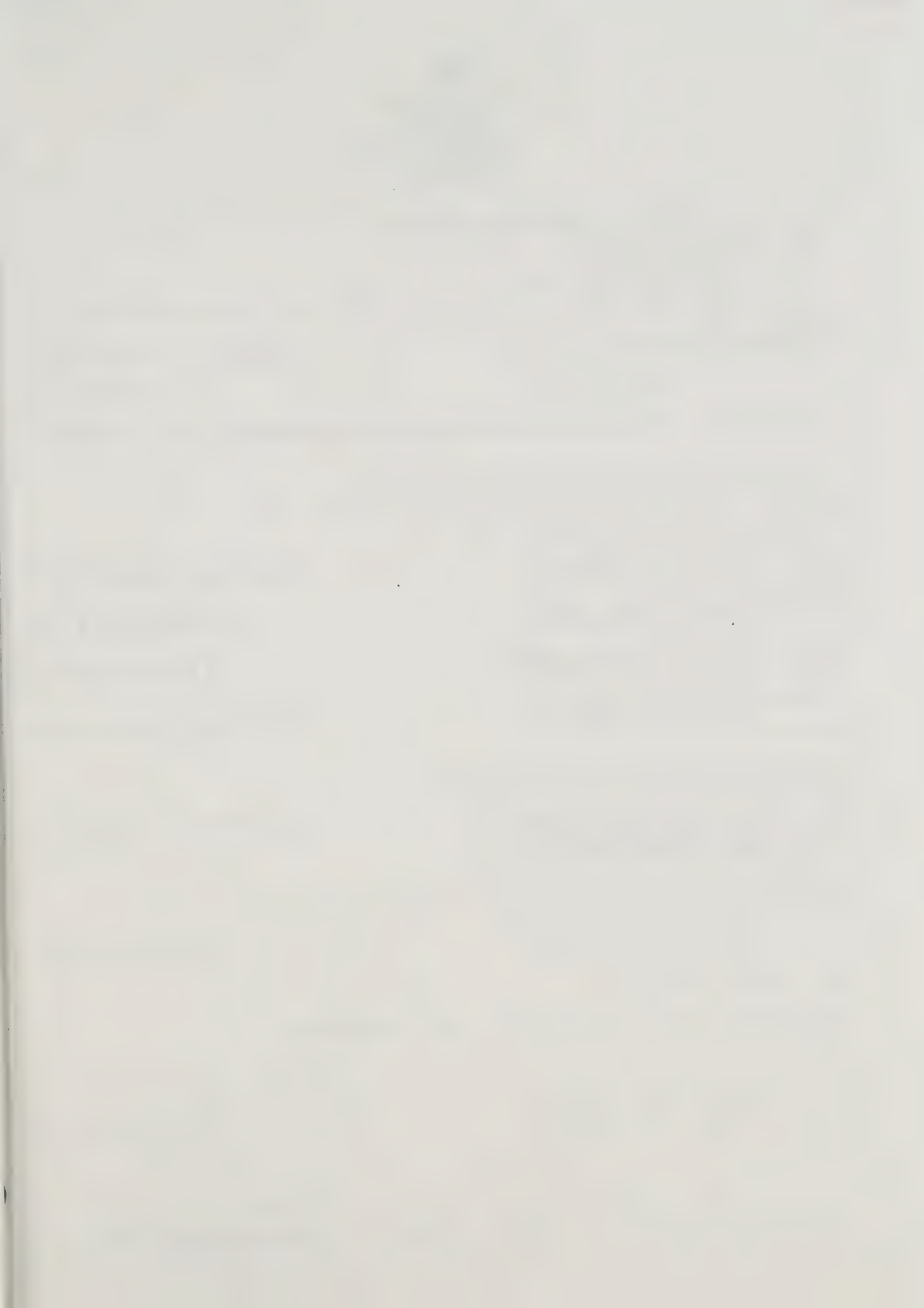
**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** I think I should just elaborate. I forgot to enlighten the Liberal critic that indeed the minister may be correct, because they were sitting in our House leader's office, which I didn't know about. I've just read the whole thing during the minister's speech, so I'm rip-roaring to go.

**The Vice-Chair:** I'm afraid it's not a point of order, but your complaint has been registered, Mrs Sullivan.

Having said that, I will adjourn the committee until tomorrow after routine proceedings, when we will hear from the opposition critics.

The committee adjourned at 1748.







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Murphy, Tim (St George-St David L) for Mr Ramsay  
O'Connor, Larry (Durham-York ND) for Mr Wiseman  
Runciman, Robert W. (Leeds-Grenville PC) for Mr Carr  
Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Ramsay  
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ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature



**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 8 June 1994**

**Mercredi 8 juin 1994**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

**Ministry of Health**

**Ministère de la Santé**

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 8 June 1994

Mercredi 8 juin 1994

The committee met at 1534 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We've reconvened for continuation of the Ministry of Health estimates. We have eight hours and 20 minutes remaining.

As I understand, we were able to complete the minister's opening statements yesterday, and by mutual agreement we're going to allow the third party to go first. The Health critic, Ms Sullivan, will go second, for her period of up to 30 minutes, and then the minister for her response. Mr Wilson, proceed.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** Minister, Deputy and colleagues, may I begin by making an apology in advance, and that is, although I have a number of concerns I'd like to express and put on the record at this time, unfortunately—or fortunately—I have to go to London this afternoon and therefore, Minister, will not be here to hear at first hand your response. I do apologize, but I'll catch up prior to the next time we convene.

Over the course of the estimates debate, we will be pursuing numerous policy areas within the Ministry of Health. What has become apparent to myself, as the Ontario PC Health critic, and to members of my caucus is that there are some troublesome common themes in NDP health policy.

The first one that perhaps bothers us the most at this time is the inappropriate imposition of ideology in the reform of health care services.

The second is a general sense that there isn't an overall plan for health care in Ontario and that the government still has some areas that are not well managed. We'll be looking at issues of mismanagement during the course of these committee proceedings.

The third area that is of concern is the lack, again, of an overall vision to restructure the province's health sector in a comprehensive way. Included in the policy areas I intend to explore over the course of the nine hours allocated are the implementation of the Regulated Health Professions Act; on-call emergency services in small rural hospital emergency departments; long-term care reform; an overall view of emergency services; reform of the Ontario drug benefit program; mental health reform; OHIP eligibility; out-of-country coverage; the new health card, and health human resource planning.

The first area I want to make some remarks on is the on-call emergency services in small, rural hospital emergency departments. I had the opportunity this afternoon to ask the minister a question pertaining to this issue.

Physicians in small communities in remote areas have

been unhappy with compensation under OHIP on a fee-for-service basis for the provision of emergency coverage. Physicians are less and less willing to accept the personal sacrifices of being on call at all times for emergency services. Remuneration under the fee-for-service system in low-patient-volume areas means limited fees for many physicians.

Some physicians have threatened to withdraw services. To date, most disputes have been resolved through alternative payment arrangements, including reallocation of hospital resources to supplement compensation to physicians.

According to a recent survey by the Ontario Hospital Association, 42 Ontario hospitals are currently making extra payments to physicians in order to guarantee access to hospital emergency services for the people of their communities. The OHA survey also found that an additional 14 hospitals have been forced to curtail emergency services, including reducing the hours of coverage.

In November 1993, the former deputy minister, Michael Decter, made a commitment to a comprehensive review of physician coverage of hospital emergency departments, involving the Ontario Medical Association and the OHA. Unfortunately, this issue remains unresolved, and I'll be pursuing that matter with the minister.

The OMA, in a May 25 letter to the Deputy Minister of Health, indicated its willingness to enter into formal negotiations with the MOH within the context of the 1991 framework agreement without any preconditions.

In May 1994, OHA held its annual conference for small hospitals. Not surprisingly, emergency department on-call physician service remuneration figured prominently on the agenda. Participants reaffirmed the direction of the November OHA resolution on this issue and underlined the immediacy of the crisis by requesting that a new, revitalized tripartite framework for negotiations be established by the Minister of Health and that this matter be resolved no later than July 31, 1994. The 56 communities that have been impacted by this issue also are pleading that this issue be resolved by July 31.

I'd like to know, as I asked the minister in the House today, what guarantees the minister can give to these communities that the government and the other parties involved will be able to resolve this issue by July 31. Second, given the failure of previous attempts to resolve this matter, again I would ask the minister to respond to the question, will she contemplate at least appointing an independent arbitrator, one acceptable to the government,

the OMA and the OHA, and have the arbitrator recommend solutions to this growing crisis?

I guess I need it clarified why the government does not at this time want to appoint an independent arbitrator. It seems to me that in your response today you made clear what the government's position is going into these talks, or as these talks have proceeded and not proceeded; they've been on and off over the past number of months. I don't see why the government's position, along with the other parties' positions, can't be put before an independent arbitrator and some solutions recommended.

**1540**

On this same issue, I have a local matter. Recently, we had a meeting, some physicians—Dr Peter Wells and some representatives from the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital—with the assistant deputy minister, Jodey Porter, and put before her a rural family practice residency program suggestion. I want to say for the record that Ms Porter was very considerate. Indeed I was impressed with her manner and approach to this issue and the courtesy she extended to the people of my riding. However, that was some several weeks ago and I've not had any follow-up from the ministry. Perhaps, Minister, you could endeavour to find out what, if any, progress has been made with that proposal put forward by the family practice physicians of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital. I think the program, and certainly Ms Porter so indicated, fits into the direction the government wants to go in helping to resolve problems in underserved areas, problems with respect to physician coverage in rural areas and the problem of attracting physicians to rural areas of this province. Given that it was a fairly amenable meeting, we are looking for a fairly quick response.

Second, the implementation of the Regulated Health Professions Act: Minister, as you know, I have had the opportunity to speak with you briefly about this issue. The current inquiry concerns rumours that are circulating that perhaps the government wants to open the RHPA up, particularly with respect to the concerns that have been expressed by dental hygienists and by dentists, and the position now being put forward by some members of the College of Dental Hygienists that being under the order of a dentist during the performance of their duties in public health might somehow impair the ability of dental hygienists to conduct their work in that sector.

I've not taken sides with this issue. I do know that some parties have asked that the whole matter be sent out to the advisory committee. I'd like to know what the government's intention is with respect to the RHPA and whether the government is contemplating opening it up for this profession or any other profession.

The whole matter of the quality assurance program has surfaced also at this time that the RHPA is being implemented. In a last-minute move during clause-by-clause debate on Bill 100, government members of the standing committee on social development introduced a motion that broadens the scope of regulatory colleges' quality assurance program. Section 22(2) of Bill 100, amending section 95 of schedule 2 of the RHPA, authorizes each of the quality assurance committees of the regulatory

colleges—the college is set up in the act to impose terms, conditions and limitations on a health practitioner's licence for up to six months.

I think most members are aware that Mike Harris, the leader of my party, has written to the minister asking that the matter be referred to the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council. Section 12 of the Regulated Health Professions Act specifies that matters be referred to the advisory council "unless, in the minister's opinion, the request is not made in good faith or is frivolous or vexatious." I understand that the Ontario Medical Association has made a similar request and that the request was first made in February of this year. I'd like to know what your intentions are with respect to this matter. Perhaps you could give us a status report also.

I also will have some questions relating to optometry and the RHPA, and, as I mentioned, dental hygiene in the RHPA, and would like to know what to date has been referred to the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council. I think it would be quite helpful if all members were brought up to date with respect to the matters that have been referred to that council.

Long-term care: A couple of days ago the second phase of long-term care legislation was introduced in the Legislature. A number of volunteer-based groups have raised very legitimate concerns with the implementation of the multiservice agencies, and some have raised concerns with the whole concept now of multiservice agencies. To be fair to the government, it would have been a little more helpful to all members if some of these conceptual concerns regarding MSAs had been raised during the discussion on Bill 101 originally.

Some of these volunteer-based groups have approached me and told me they view MSAs as the forced demise of volunteer-based community groups. They maintain that the loss of volunteers will translate into the loss of dedication to work in governance positions, a loss in the commitment to provide hands-on services, a loss of the historic values and commitments made by volunteers to these agencies, a reduction in donations and fund-raising ability, and a reduction in consumer choice.

Organizations such as the Catholic Health Association of Ontario believe that MSAs will eliminate consumer choice and ignore the history of competency in governance and management of Ontario's long-term care facilities and community-based organizations. They believe this legislation will undoubtedly put yet another nail in the coffin of the private home care sector.

I'm surprised how many non-profit groups and groups that you would not expect to be commenting too much on the issue have now come forward and expressed concerns similar to those I have expressed on behalf of my party with respect to the private sector and the direction the government is going in driving the private sector out of the delivery of home care services. The NDP has made no secret of its preference for non-profit home care services. They've also made it clear that the general thrust of the government is to not have the private sector involved to any great extent in the delivery of health and social services across the board.

On the subject of private sector involvement in health



care services, my party has been vocal in opposition to the government's repeated attacks on private sector involvement in the delivery of health care services. We believe public administration of the health care system should not necessarily translate into public ownership of facilities. My caucus colleagues and I have been consistent proponents of the view that the private sector is a major contributor to the province's health care system, enhancing both the quality and availability of services for all Ontarians. We defended the critical role of the private sector in the delivery of health care services during the debate surrounding Bill 101, the Long-Term Care Statute Law Amendment Act.

The NDP government, basing its decisions on ideology instead of pragmatism, has shown favour for the not-for-profit long-term care service sector, thereby ignoring the essential role the private sector plays in meeting the needs of consumers. This makes no sense to the PC Party of Ontario, nor does it make much sense to many of the service providers or to many of the consumers.

The most recent example of the inappropriate imposition of ideology has been in relation to in-home health care services. What is most disturbing about this decision is the government's obvious disregard for the serious and disruptive spinoff effects this policy move will have on consumers. There are several practical problems with strict adherence to this preference, including the dislocation of workers, the creation of significant gaps in services and the limitation of consumer choice.

Private home care providers were shocked to hear originally from a senior adviser in the Premier's office back in November 1992 that the government intended to cut their market share of home care services from the current 45% to 10% in two years. This decision was made without the benefit of a single study to determine the socioeconomic or cost-benefit impact of this policy decision. Minister, you've admitted and your predecessor's readily admitted that there are no studies available in the Ministry of Health to prove that driving the private sector out of the delivery of services is somehow better for the people of Ontario.

Recently, you admitted, in response to a reporter's question and to a question I asked in the House following your press conference announcing the second stage of long-term care reform, that the 10% limitation now will be a legislated 20% limit for each multiservice agency on the amount of private home care services that it may purchase.

As Health critic, these issues greatly concern me, and I hope this committee process will allow us to discuss some of the implications of this ill-conceived, ideologically driven policy of the government.

1550

It's been the policy for many years in this province that there be a balance between the role of the private sector and the public sector in the delivery of health care services. It was about 1986, I suppose, when that balance started to shift and the previous Liberal government expressed a preference towards the public or not-for-profit sector and moving away from the private sector, but regardless of that announcement by the previous

government, we still found that the private sector was involved in about 45% of the delivery of community-based home care services.

When the government pays the same amount of money to not-for-profit agencies and commercial agencies, I don't see how, at the end of the day, from the government's point of view, the payor's point of view, there can be any benefit one way or the other. It's all fine and dandy to go around talking about how people shouldn't make a profit on the backs of the sick or on the backs of children, but if we look at what's happened in the area of child care and we look at what the auditor of this province has said about that scam, we realize that a lot of money has been spent trying to drive private sector day care operators out of business and not creating new spaces or reducing the waiting list for subsidies.

We will continue to pursue this throughout the dying months, perhaps, of your government, and it's not something we are pleased with at all. Common sense indicates that there seems to be no rhyme or reason for this other than an ideological preference.

Quite sharply, you could say, in response to my question the other day in the House, Minister, you accused me of having as much ideology, if not more, than the government. I don't think ours is ideology, though, as much as a belief in the fact that consumers should drive the system and a belief that a consumer-driven marketplace will decide who will deliver the services to them and that there isn't a role for government in making arbitrary decisions and distorting that consumer choice.

I could see a role for government if somehow one sector was being paid more or was costing the government more, but we've not seen any studies to indicate that the private sector is indeed costing the government more or being paid more for the services it delivers. In fact I think the rule of thumb out there over the years has been that having the private sector involved in the delivery of many government services helps to keep competition in the system and helps to keep prices down also in the public sector, and it's been generally good for this province.

Obviously, I want to talk during this time about the Ontario drug benefit program. Minister, we are still awaiting the release of details that will shed some light on your government's overhaul of the ODB. While the seven principles of reform and six areas for consultation outlined in the government's paper suggest the general format of the government's hopes for a new drug plan, precise details are still missing. The only matter we've obtained any certainty about is the fact that the government does not intend to introduce a copayment for persons 65 years and older, as was contemplated at one time by the government.

Last summer, a week before the Ontario Federation of Labour convention here in Toronto, the government announced it wouldn't move ahead on a copayment. That leaves, in my look at things, a great deal of pressure on the actual drugs that are allowed to be listed and remain listed on the formulary.

Having just had a seniors' seminar in my riding last



week, the majority of questions surrounded the Advocacy Act, the Consent to Treatment Act and Powers of Attorney Act. I shouldn't have been surprised but was somewhat surprised about what experts individual seniors are on the ODB. They were able to get up and tell me exactly what drugs had been delisted and give me the history, in many cases. There were over 100 seniors at this seminar, and probably half in the room took the opportunity to express concerns about drugs they can no longer get.

I think the issue has been contained to the extent that they're currently able to get some substitute drugs. But if the government keeps randomly delisting drugs, we're going to hear from seniors in this province, because one of these days something is going to be delisted that impacts very severely on that population.

If you ask seniors the following question, "Would you like us to continue just delisting drugs?" in their words they say we're delisting with no rhyme or reason. They don't know why they can't get one but can get another. "Do you want us to keep delisting drugs or would you want us to have as many drugs available on the formulary and you pay a small fee"—a yearly fee or whatever model you come up with—"towards the cost of keeping those drugs on the formulary and providing them to seniors and those on social assistance?" Overwhelmingly, audiences—and I've posed the question many times over the past two years—say: "No, I'd rather have access to the whole range of drugs. I trust my physician and my care givers, and we'd like to have access to the whole range of drugs available in this world, to the best humanly possible, and yes, we are willing, as long as it's means-tested some way, to pay a copayment." The government, in contemplating copayments, must have had similar feedback from the seniors community.

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** I wish we had.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I find it depends on how you pose the question, because seniors really do know what's going on. I think they feel they're being attacked in a number of areas, and that's probably why we're getting a negative response to copayments at this point, because there are other things, like out-of-country health services, that I want to talk about also. But if we level with people and say we've got an affordability problem and go to the public and ask them to help solve that problem, I'm confident we can come up with some solutions.

Just to put you on notice, I'll also be asking some specific questions about the special drugs program and the government's future intentions in that area.

With respect to OHIP and out-of-country payments, I remain very concerned with the recent changes to the Ontario health insurance plan. As of June 30, 1994, the province will only pay \$100 per day for individuals who need emergency hospital treatment when travelling outside of Canada. The current rate is \$400 per day, which reflects approximately the amount that hospitals in Ontario charge per day for a patient's stay in hospital.

It's my firm belief that the slashing of out-of-country coverage violates the Canada Health Act and specifically the portability clause. This violation is made clear in

subclause 11(1)(b)(ii), which states, "where the insured health services are provided out of Canada, payment is made on the basis of the amount that would have been paid by the province for similar services rendered in the province...."

Minister, I have a couple of questions about that. So far, your only defence in moving to reduce your out-of-country payments has been, "Well, other provinces did it and they didn't get in trouble from the federal government, which has the responsibility for enforcing the Canada Health Act, so I guess it was okay." I think you should take a more responsible approach to that. Just because other provinces are in breach of the law doesn't mean Ontario should be trying to get away with it too.

**1600**

Secondly, there's the claim by the government that somehow you'll save \$20 million on this. What seniors and I find offensive about that is that it almost implies that people—because you were paying over the last year and a half a capped amount anyway, a fixed amount of \$400 per day for out-of-country reimbursement, which approximated what the cost was in Ontario—seniors are somehow going to Florida or Texas and purposely having their heart attacks down there. It seems to me that if you're going to have a heart attack, you're going to have it wherever you are and whenever God decides it's time. Whether you have that heart attack in Ontario and the province therefore has to pay, for argument's sake, the \$400 a day under OHIP or you have that down in Florida and the province has to pay \$400 a day, the province still pays. To say that you're going to save money, I just don't see how you're going to do it.

What's going to happen obviously is that people are not going to go south as frequently or in as great numbers as in the past and they're going to get sick, as they would have gotten sick anyway, I suppose, in Ontario. At the end of the day, you're not going to save \$20 million. I'd really like to know what studies you have or what proof you have that you can save money, those significant dollars, from this initiative.

Secondly, I continue to argue, as do many senior advocates, that it may very well be the case that some seniors save us dollars. If you're severely arthritic or have other ailments, maybe the best place for you is to spend a couple of months in a warmer climate rather than being pent up in your home here in Canada and suffering and visiting the emergency room at night etc. It's not all bad that seniors travel south, some for legitimate health reasons. I really never have had the government admit that indeed some seniors do travel for legitimate health reasons. That admission would be helpful, Minister.

You must know people in my area, as I do, who aren't terribly wealthy but go down south for exactly that reason, because they just feel better. They use their savings and spend time in a warmer climate and probably save us money, although I don't have any hard evidence—I have anecdotal evidence—that they would save us money.

Health cards: All members of the committee are well aware of the mismanagement that's gone on in Ontario's health card system over the years. It's an issue on which

I, on behalf of my party, have consistently, and with a great deal of determination, tried to get the government to make the right decision. I don't think, with the fairly recent announcement that you're going to put photos on a magnetic strip card, that you've come up with the right answer. For the first few months of this year I purposely stopped raising health card fraud matters to give the government some breathing room, hoping that you would adopt a smart card system, because at the end of the day you've only served one purpose with the announcement of your intention to introduce photo ID, and that is that you've met your obligations under the OMA-government agreement, but you've done nothing to enhance data management, data collection and health care analysis of the data.

I've had some wonderful discussions recently with people from ICES, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, who, without mentioning any names, explained to me the frustration in trying to find the data they feel should be readily available in our health card system, that having a magnetic strip card, although it may be the cheaper option at this time, is not the technology we should be embracing because it won't in any way improve our data.

I'm sure you agree, Minister, that the real saving that will come in the future to our health care system is not to continue on a slash-and-burn approach but to obtain good data and to undertake proper analysis of that data, which ICES is trying to do. However, the good people at ICES will have to live many, many years beyond a normal lifespan to cover all of the treatments and procedures that are used in this province in our health care system and to properly analyse and report back as to the direction we should be going in treating both disease and preventing disease and illness in our society.

Again, I would like an explanation, Minister, on why you moved towards a simple magnetic strip card again, what the government's intention is with respect to better data collection and management and analysis, and how you're going to achieve those better ends with technology that was put in place in other sectors of our economy long before I was born and technology that is so outdated that really only the Ontario government's embracing it any more. It's a shame, because if you had made the decision to go to, and bite the bullet on the cost of, a smart-card system or a better data system, then over the long run I believe those systems would have paid for themselves.

Secondly, I think all parties have been approached by the banking consortium that had approached the government in the past offering to pay for much of the cost of implementing and starting up and putting in place the hardware for a smart-card-based health card system. I want to know—I've never been able to get an answer from the ministry—why the ministry rejected the help from the private sector in that area, specifically the proposals put forward by a banking consortium, which was made up of the major banks in our province. To me, their approach made eminent sense and I don't know why the government rejected it and embraced technology, as I said, that's so old as to be useless.

These are just some of the areas that I hope we have the opportunity to explore in greater depth during the time that's allocated for this committee. I hope, Minister, you'll also be able to tell us how you intend to proceed with Bill 119, your smoking legislation. I'm getting a little tired of the actions that are occurring in the Legislature almost on a daily basis with petitions being read by government members accusing my party of holding up this piece of legislation; that's ridiculous. You know with the new rules imposed by your government, we can't possibly hold up a piece of legislation. In fact, it's quite a falsehood to put out there that we are holding up legislation. If you want to deal with this bill, you can ram it through with your majority like you've done with every other piece of legislation. You've obviously decided that same-sex legislation is more important. You brought it forward even though you had something as important as Bill 119 on the agenda.

You'll have your chance to respond to that, Minister. I know you have a different opinion. I appreciate all members' time today and look forward to the responses from the government.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** I'd like to begin my remarks by quoting excerpts from a paper that has been written recently by the chairs of the family medicine schools in Ontario. I'll let Hansard know when the quote ends, but I thought it was a particularly valuable piece of work. They say:

"The creation of our national health system is one of the landmarks of Canadian nation-building, much like the building of the railways from coast to coast in the last century. Building a national health care system broke new ground in the creation of our national identity.

"Until recently, medicare was such an untouchable national institution that public discussion about the need to reform certain aspects of it was nearly impossible.

"It's not surprising that medicare was a major issue in the election," that is, the federal election. "Media reports focused on four areas:

"Possible changes that threaten reduced access to the health care system;

"The possibility of reduced services available to consumers;

"The cost of health care as a contributor to national debt; and

"The possibility of user fees.

"Health care is a major industry. It provides services to Canadians through a variety of provincial plans, and employs hundreds of thousands of people. Does today's system, however, meet the needs of the population? Does it meet the principles enshrined in the original medicare legislation: accessibility, universality, comprehensiveness, portability, and public administration? Is it effective and efficient? Is it affordable? Are the originally enunciated principles out of date? Do we need to add new ones?"

That's the end of the quote, for Hansard.

1610

The recent ICES atlas, *Patterns of Health Care in Ontario*, concluded in its final chapter that "the three



keynotes for modern health care are effectiveness, efficiency and equity."

I'd like to draw also from the ICES report for another conclusion with respect to accountability issues in health care, and, once again for Hansard, a quote starts:

"For the present, however, there is no single and rapid solution to the current problem. Short-term responses to the affordability crisis are therefore likely to be piecemeal and increasingly dependent on an improved information flow among stakeholders....Clearly, for Ontario's health system to do better with less, or at least to hold the line against erosion in the quality and accessibility of care, there will also need to be an enormous ongoing investment of energy and goodwill. The success of such an investment may depend on new local and provincial structures bringing together key stakeholders in the health care system. Many groups and agencies have important roles in providing and managing health care, but coordination is crucial if there is to be clearer accountability for system performance."

Those two reports and their approaches have been presented by other bodies and I believe that the statements underline several issues of vital importance in today's health care debate, not the least of which are effectiveness, efficiency, equity, affordability and accountability, which are new measures against which our health care system must be judged.

No one believes that health care delivery should be returned to the place it was close to 30 years ago—between 25 and 30 years ago, I suppose—when medicare was first devised. Changing demographics, new scientific knowledge, new technologies, new goals, new expectations and new affordability pressures bring change and a drive for change in our medicare system.

It's my view that the issue of affordability will not go away, and in fact will not go away for many years, and must be a significant component of any system reform. Further, there should be a public dialogue about the affordability issues as discussion of change takes place.

Any change that occurs must be directed, it must be coordinated, it must be effected with the goodwill and energy that ICES speaks of. It must be consistent in its approach, it must be accepted by and accountable to the three components which the deans of family medicine described: the purchaser, the provider and the consumer.

In speaking to the estimates, I want to underline that in my view, cost containment itself is not reform, and whether it's masked in words such as caps or deinstitutionalization or rollbacks or downsizing or restructuring or rationalization or cutbacks or recapture or delisting or copayments or user fees or reallocation or rationing—we've heard all of those words—the impact is still the same.

ICES has pointed out that Ontario, as with other provinces, has a hospital system in transition and raises the question—once again, another quote for Hansard: "The issue is whether the transition can continue without damage to the quality or accessibility of care."

I don't think that we should underestimate the ability of the people to understand that change must occur. It's

been my experience that consumers and health care providers alike value the health care system in Ontario and are willing to adjust expectations to ensure the viability of this system. However, what I'm told by those same people is that what is occurring and what they are frightened of is a dismantling of the medicare system. They see the minister making impulsive decisions to solve immediate problems without the understanding of the long-range implications of those decisions.

In my own community, professionals and patients tell me that care is already compromised because patients cannot get care in the right place at the right time by the right professional. We have the lowest number of long-term care beds per population in the province. We have some of the most enlightened hospital leadership, and I think that the minister and the deputy minister would recognize that, in my area, but we have inadequate home care services for those patients who don't need to be in hospital but do need professional health care.

We have lengthy waiting lists for treatment, whether in hospital or on an out-patient basis. We have volunteer services that rightly feel threatened by new long-term care proposals, and what we see generally is a crisis in confidence in the health care system and a morale crisis among our health care professionals. In my view, none of those circumstances bode well for reform and none of those affected see these issues, frankly, as reform issues.

Let me give you another example of the frustration that's felt in some quarters by both the health care professionals and the patients and their families. The government has announced that it intends to contain the costs of the Ontario drug benefit program and that new single-source drugs will not be added to the formulary unless there's an offset, and any addition to the formulary must be cost-neutral.

What's occurred, however, is that cost neutrality is measured only within the confines of the drug benefit program itself. The pharmacoeconomic model that the government has chosen to adopt means that the manufacturer must reduce the cost on other listed drugs or take one off the formulary. There's no opportunity to make the case for a full economic appraisal of the benefit of their product on a system-wide basis because the criteria have been compartmentalized into a silo economic evaluation, and there's also no opportunity to include a measure of quality-of-life improvement or enhanced health status.

In my constituency, I have a company called Genentech which has developed a biopharmaceutical product, a DNA enzyme called pulmozyme, for the treatment of cystic fibrosis patients, and is a breakthrough treatment. For cystic fibrosis patients, the product liquefies sputum, works in vivo and reduces the environment for infection, which leads to both increased hospital stays and shortened life.

Patients who are now coming off clinical trials and have met the criteria which have been set by the CF specialists are anxious to maintain the therapy because they have seen significant improvement in their health status and in their quality of life. They want to maintain that improved health status that's been brought about by



this new enzyme. The enzyme was approved by the federal health protection branch and the FDA at the same time and framework trials have shown efficacy for a significant portion, but not all, of the CF population. Application has been made through the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee for its listing and availability by CF clinicians through Ontario's 10 cystic fibrosis clinics.

Other provinces have approved this drug, and yet Ontario has sent pulmozyme to the DQTC rather than to the special drugs program for fast-tracking and assessment. That leaves CF patients in Ontario without the most up-to-date therapy that could and may well should be provided to them. The minister received a letter on April 22 requesting a meeting with providers and recipients of the drug, and there's still been no acknowledgement of the letter or a meeting date set.

The issue here of the offset data which were required is one that I think is problematic. The offset data were provided and offsets, however, from reductions in numbers of hospitalizations, numbers of hospital days, IVs, physician fees and oral antibiotic treatments could be identified. Furthermore, a significant improvement in lung function was traced over an 18-month period, along with a 30% reduction in infection rates.

1620

Again I underline, this is a breakthrough therapy, a biotechnical product and not an ordinary chemical approach, and is the first dedicated CF drug introduced in 30 years. If the offset rule is maintained as it stands, this drug will not have an appropriate and full economic appraisal and therefore will not be available to CF patients because the economic offsets required cannot be met through comparators with existing listed drugs. There are no measurements also of quality of life or improved health status in this particular process. Cost containment, through the offset criteria which have been defined, will therefore mean that what may well be an opportunity for an enhanced quality of life, an increased health benefit, is not taken into account. It seems to me that simple rules don't always account for health benefit.

I think there are other examples where the simple cost-containment rules may well lead to increased costs. New rules relating to home oxygen availability may well mean that 3,000 patients across Ontario who hitherto have qualified for home oxygen will no longer qualify. In fact, we're told that those who had previously been identified as eligible for respiratory services will be removed from that service. The predictable is likely to happen: health deterioration and subsequent increased costs as a result of necessary increased hospitalization and professional costs.

If there is an appropriate assessment of the medical value and necessity of those services that is public and understandable to the professional and the consumer, then there's an appropriate scenario for change. But if those rule changes are made simply to contain costs, then within one silo of the cost, that being the assistive devices program, the government bears a real burden in its lack of accountability to patients and providers.

An area which I want to explore at greater length during the course of the estimates inquiry is that related to the \$41-million cutback, which is year to year from

this year's estimates over last year's actual, in spending devoted to mental health services. This, in rough calculations, is something over a 6% cut.

I know that the estimates are estimates-based and show a cut of 6.1% but, given that those services which were provided in the past were already strained and needed by a particularly vulnerable portion of our population, for whom the need for increased rather than reduced services has been identified over a long period of time, I believe that this decision demands a thorough explanation and defence. I'm asking the minister and her officials to devote some time to this particular issue during the estimates consideration, and we will want to put substantial questions about what we see as a major redirection of emphasis. I don't know who's here today from the ministry, but perhaps we can start off with some explanation of that particular cut in this afternoon's discussion.

The minister has spoken at great length of initiatives that she's taking to control fraud in the health care system by spending \$110 million over the next five years on a new identification card. Minister, I know you know that I cannot imagine a worse-defined strategy or public spending policy than this initiative. The prediction of savings cannot be substantiated by any study or experience and I believe is a flamboyant guesstimate at best. Anyone with expertise in the information technology field simply rolls their eyes in disgust, but the taxpayer will pay in the end.

I make no apologies or defence for what has occurred under past governments. An apportioning of blame must surely be put behind us. Isn't it time to do what every assessment of this issue has told us to do: forget the slogans and get down to the real business? Isn't it time to use modern technology and our skilled human resources to bring an information system that can maintain a secure patient record, that can help us with the administration and management of health care, that can help us to evaluate those services that are provided and that the most effective are used, that can help us plan to guarantee that we have the right facilities and people in place to deal with our health care needs?

Isn't it time that we offered our health care professionals and facilities a mechanism for simple verification of eligibility and a cost-effective and timely way to submit accounts and be paid for services provided? And isn't it time that we co-opted and involved and accepted as partners people from the private sector who have expertise and capital that can be used to help us answer our public requirements?

We beg the minister to abandon what is widely seen as a foolish initiative and begin the real work on an integrated health information system. Parts of it have been started—the drug network is one around which I have discussed some of the positive impacts with pharmacists—and I believe there are many other major initiatives that should take place, but they should be planned from the beginning and a strategic direction worked out from the beginning, rather than adding piecemeal change later on, which in the end becomes far more costly.

I want to raise the issue of predictability and stability in Ministry of Health decision-making, which is a matter

of continuing concern through the entire health care industry. The minister well knows, because I know she's heard articulate arguments about the difficulties that have been faced by hospitals that learned of abrupt changes in budget and funding decisions. The changes that they might have had the flexibility to make with appropriate planning, and therefore with the buy-in of stakeholders, were compromised by new demands from the ministry and new levels of funding transfers. That's one negative aspect of ad hoc or changed direction, an abrupt change in direction and decision-making.

There are other areas that matter as well. The Regulated Health Professions Act has taken years to reach a legislative, regulatory phase, and about a year from now all the regulations under the RHPA for the 22 existing acts will finally be in place. Everyone will breathe a sigh of relief when that occurs. The Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council has been seen as a fundamental part of a process to ensure the review and assessment of additions of new self-regulating health professions or in changes to the mandates of existing professions.

We were therefore disturbed to learn that the HPRAC process is to be short-circuited through the direct decision of the Minister of Health regarding potential amendments to the Dental Hygiene Act. This process change adds to concerns about integrity of the process and further adds to concerns about predictability and stability in the system. The issue of predictability, I point out, goes beyond funding and moves into expectations with respect to policy decisions as well. I brought one example of that here with respect to legislative amendments to the Dental Hygiene Act. Many others could come to mind and will probably be brought forward during the course of these estimates.

The minister well knows that I'm strongly opposed to her announcement regarding the reduction of out-of-country coverage for emergency treatment and that my objection is that this is a direct contravention of the portability provision of the Canada Health Act. My concern is that if the government is willing to compromise in such a blatant way one of the fundamental premises and principles of the Canada Health Act, what is its next compromise and what is the next principle that will be taken away?

If the Canada Health Act needs change, then let's bring those change issues to the attention of the Ontario public and ask them what new principles should be added to the Canada Health Act or what principles should be changed and in what way. Ontario has an obligation to put those issues on the federal agenda. But to make an arbitrary change which is a very clear and direct contravention of one of the major and singularly important provisions of the Canada Health Act, in my view, is absolutely the wrong way to go and underlines some of the deep concerns that are felt by individuals and health care providers and professionals about whether indeed medicare is about to come apart at the seams.

1630

As I conclude my remarks, and they have been shorter than the full half-hour, I see some real hope for improve-

ment through the government's cancer strategy, and I once again reiterate that I'm concerned that the network or coordinating committee is a temporary vehicle.

In her remarks to the committee at the beginning of the session, the minister mentioned that the Princess Margaret-Toronto Hospital joint venture initiative is a positive one in bringing together the formal cancer system with the informal cancer system and the expertise and experience of those institutions. That's an initiative which I too celebrate, and I know it's one which came out of the energy, the initiative and the leadership of those two hospitals.

In the future, after the initial PMH-TGH bugs have been exposed and hopefully some of them eliminated, I personally expect and hope that some of the other hospitals such as Mount Sinai, Sick Children's and Women's College will be added to that joint venture approach to cancer care.

With the academic component of the University of Toronto, I believe that initiative will bring significant coordination and collaborative work to cancer care and cancer control in the Metro Toronto area and particularly in downtown Toronto at the U-5 hospitals.

But I want to point out that this initiative began with the institutions themselves. The direction was not imposed nor even led by the Ministry of Health. No false deadlines were set. No declarations or demands were made from outside. As well, the tough issues, including the funding issues, the human resources issues, the determination of how the full continuum of care can be met, the research goals prioritized, still require considered examination within those institutions. Neither the PMH nor the Toronto Hospital have an easy row to hoe over the next few months as they face those issues square on.

This is but one example of initiatives occurring around the province that should be celebrated. Actions taken locally to solve common concerns in these difficult financial times are ones that require praise and acknowledgement. Many of these actions have not been as a result of ministry intervention but by those in the field who want to maintain the best level of service to their patients at the local level. They've had the courage to try to lift themselves above constraining forces, many of which are imposed by government, and they've exhibited a commitment to our health care system that I believe is admirable. In this, as in many things, they've shown that if government keeps its mind on end goals, other components of the health care system can concentrate on their roles and also be truly accountable for the continuation and growth of the medicare system.

**The Chair:** Minister, would you like to proceed with your 25 minutes?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd like to ask for some direction as to how you wish to proceed. Mr Wilson in his comments had made reference to a number of fairly specific issues which I would like to respond to. I don't know whether it's possible to reserve some time to respond when he is able to be here at our next meeting and let me respond rather generally now to Mrs Sullivan's comments, or whether your rules require me to respond to both of them at the same sitting.



**The Chair:** What we'd recommend is that you respond in accordance with the presentation, and we'll ensure that Mr Wilson has instant Hansard so he's up to speed for the next meeting. If there are responses which require a fuller or more detailed response, if they were treated in a similar fashion to an order paper question and staff could provide those in writing, we'd find that extremely helpful. If they could be circulated through the clerk, they'll be distributed to the members of the committee and that'll help facilitate further discussion. I think the questions were raised to precipitate further questioning during the course of the estimates. If we can proceed on that understanding, that's generally the procedure we work with.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I appreciate that, Mr Chair. You're absolutely right that the issues that were flagged were the ones that, we certainly agree, deserve some full debate during our time before this committee. Whether we respond in writing or whether the ministry officials who are present are able to give the answers during the debate, we certainly plan to do that.

Let me start by responding generally to Mrs Sullivan's remarks. I think this kind of exercise often explains or clarifies the difference in perception, because certainly the quotations from the deans of family practice and from ICES that Mrs Sullivan has quoted at length I would agree with. I would of course affirm that we believe the ministry is proceeding in the directions that have been recommended.

As I said in my opening remarks to this committee yesterday, I think I very clearly set out that we have a goal, we have an understanding of the kind of health care system we wish to maintain and to change in this province. We believe the actions we have taken and the framework within which they have been taken have very clearly put us on the road to a new direction that enables us to assure the people of this province that they will have in the years to come a health care system that is affordable, effective and efficient.

I recognize in this exercise that for every example I would cite as demonstrating the truth of that approach, my critics would of course probably view the same action as evidence of our lack of progress towards that same goal. But it is somewhat comforting to begin by recognizing that we at least share the same objective, which is, if I may say so, the fact that the way we proceeded during the 1980s is no longer sustainable and that the kind of double-digit increases in health care spending that exemplified the actions of governments at all levels—and I'm not pointing partisan fingers—in all provinces and of all political stripes, have come to an end.

It is better management, it is better accountability, it is the development of the tools to enable us to do that that I think we are all quite legitimately struggling to construct, to define and then to put in place. In Ontario we are doing that in a way that combines the best of both the local, decentralized approach and the need for the province as the funder to lay out very clearly what our goals and expectations are.

In my opening remarks I quoted from Dennis Timbrell, and let me quote it again: "On the national scene only

Ontario and Manitoba still put faith in local governments' operation of health care. Other provinces have taken central control and abolished local boards. They have absolute central control. There is no evidence this improves the quality of health care or cost-effectiveness." I would agree.

When Mrs Sullivan describes some of my actions as impulsive or flamboyant, not words that I frequently hear attributed to my approach, I don't know whether to be pleased or unhappy. But I think any actions I have taken have been consistent with my belief that a decentralized approach to the planning that involves as many people as possible is the way to go and that a framework that clearly identifies the ultimate objectives encourages that.

While she would characterize the actions of Princess Margaret and the Toronto Hospital in coming together to provide integrated cancer care as solely driven by the actions of those hospitals—and yes, indeed the hospitals took the initiative and moved quickly on that—I would of course counter by saying that our long discussions around cancer care and the need for a framework and the need for a network and the need for a more integrated system encouraged, facilitated and perhaps led to the decisions that are being taken by those hospitals.

What matters is: Were they the right decisions? Do they contribute to a more effective and efficient and affordable and accountable system? Are they in the best interests of all the people the health care system is designed to serve? That, ultimately, has to be the test of everything we do.

Mrs Sullivan also spent some time—I suppose I should say the member for Halton Centre; isn't that my correct terminology here, as in the House?—putting some emphasis on the Ontario drug benefit plan. I am not, as she is, an expert on some of the economic aspects of specific drugs or equipped to comment on those, but let me say to her that I would agree we have not got a mechanism to do the kind of pharmaco-economic analysis of drugs that we need to do.

#### 1640

But any decisions about the delisting or the listing of drugs are not made without good data. They are made by the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee, which is an objective group of experts drawn from different backgrounds to determine what is in the best interests of the Ontario drug benefit plan to be listed.

To expand beyond that into a greater understanding of the effects on the entire system of those drugs, and whether or not they are available, I would agree with her, is a road that we have go down. Particularly as the system changes to shorter stays in hospital, to a greater emphasis on home care, we have to be able to do that analysis. ICES, in *Patterns of Health in Ontario: The Practice Atlas*, clearly made the point that we need to look at the way in which prescription drugs are prescribed and to get a better handle on that.

When my critic from the third party talks about going back to a system where every drug that was available on the market was paid for by the province under the Ontario drug benefit plan, I say to him that I don't think



that's in the best interests of the health of the people the Ontario drug benefit plan is designed to serve. Any drug that has been delisted from the plan by the ministry has been delisted only on the advice of the DQTC and because it is, in their opinion, not going to impact on the ultimate outcome, the health care and the wellbeing of the client, to do that delisting. Again I say that that has to be the ultimate test.

Yes, we need better data and we need a better understanding, which we are developing and which will come over time, of the total effects on the system of the prescribing of drugs or the non-prescribing of drugs.

The member for Halton Centre also talked about the changes in the mental health system. We do have officials here whom I would like to ask to comment on that specifically. Whether we spend some time on that today or get to that on another occasion, I would agree that that is certainly one area where we need to spend some time and which I would rather have officials respond to, than do it in this time frame.

I'm a little surprised in the comment that hospitals have had abrupt changes in their budgets and in the levels of transfer payments and were required to respond without any background or consultation to those, because nothing could be farther from the case. The discussions with respect to reallocation within the hospital budgets were part of the discussions with the Ontario Hospital Association and the result of an extensive period of developing a formula, clustering hospitals with their peers in order to determine which ones were effective and where there might be some reallocation.

I think the surprise for hospitals this year was our ability to announce that there would not be any change in the transfer payments, that we would maintain the zero increase as opposed to a decrease, which I think was a welcome surprise, as opposed to anything else.

Both members referred to the Regulated Health Professions Act, and again I'm sure we'll get into more discussion on that in the interchange later. But let me refer specifically to the question of dental hygienists, which was raised by both of them, and point out that the question of the scope of practice of dental hygienists was something that was certainly debated during the passage of the legislation, and that the act, as passed, in section 5, which I think is the contentious one, clearly sets out what the scope of practice of dental hygienists might be.

There is a concern on the part of the hygienists that they do not have as broad a scope of practice as they would like to have, and I think the issue is, how do we resolve that? They would like to see us move an amendment to the legislation. I have indicated to them that, at this point and in this session of the Legislature, in fact maybe even in the next session of the Legislature, that is not something we see ourselves being able to do.

Let me say that as we all learn how to implement and live with RHPA, I think we will find that there may well be some tinkering with the legislation that over time needs to be done. I think we need to have some period of time to work with the legislation before we begin to make specific amendments around specific pieces of it, because we may well want to look at a larger package of

amendments at some time in the future. But I know the concern of the dental hygienists and am happy to be able to tell the committee that, as an interim measure, the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario and the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario have come to an agreement which allows dentists to issue a general, rather than a case-by-case, specific order for most procedures. I certainly hope that agreement will allay some of the concerns of the dental hygienists and enable them to carry out their practice as they have wished to do and as they have in many cases been doing in the past.

I was trying to deal with most of the issues raised by Mrs Sullivan and then turn to the issues raised by Mr Wilson, and I think it was the out-of-country, the general approach to OHIP, that you had touched on and that he had touched on too. I have to say to both of them that as we try to constrain the costs and reverse the trends in increasing costs that I have referred to and that were there for the 10 years before our government came to power and before the economy deteriorated underneath us, we had to look very carefully at things we had paid for in the past and that, in our opinion, we could no longer continue to pay for. Many of those were the kind of open-ended programs that had resulted in excessive payments to hospitals in out-of-country.

I don't agree with Mrs Sullivan that, as a result of the changes in payments from \$400 to \$100 a day for treatment in foreign hospitals, very many people who travel will be dissuaded from doing so. The decision to look to make some savings in that area as opposed to other areas was a deliberate one, knowing that people who travel have insurance anyway, because the \$400 frequently didn't meet the costs of hospitals in the United States, in fact very seldom did.

What we are asking those people who travel to do is to pay a little bit more on the insurance that they purchase and were already purchasing so we can continue to maintain and indeed to expand the quality of the services that are available here in Ontario, both for those people who remain in Ontario for the most part of every year and also for those people who now travel and who need to have those services maintained for them when they return, or, as in many cases, if they are seniors, when they reach the stage when they are no longer travelling regularly and need to take full advantage of the services here in Ontario. Difficult though some of those decisions are, they were ones we made in the best interests of the system as a whole.

Let me turn to some of the issues that Mr Wilson had raised and say to him in absentia, but on the record, that when he opened his comments by accusing us of being driven by ideology, as I said to him in the House yesterday and as I said at the opening of this stage of my comments, ideology is all in the eye of the beholder. Whether it is the ideology of this government that the Canada Health Act is the framework within which we maintain and support the health care system, which is a not-for-profit delivery of health care services, or whether it is the ideology of his party, which is that if it can be done by the private sector, that's preferable, we're the government.

The revolution he is advocating indicates that people would be required to pay a health tax, and that too is a suggestion we reject. That kind of introduction of a fee or a user payment for health care is, in my opinion, the beginning of undermining a system that Canadians feel very strongly about and desire to keep as universal, accessible, affordable and effective as possible.

1650

**The Chair:** Could I get clarification on that? Does that mean the employer health tax is inside or outside of the Canada Health Act?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The employer health tax is entirely consistent with the Canada Health Act, which says you will pay for the health care system by way of public taxation, and the employer health tax is one form of taxation which contributes towards the payment of the \$17-billion budget of this province for the health care system. It doesn't go a very far distance in meeting that \$17-billion commitment. It is our sales taxes, our income taxes, our corporate taxes that make up the bulk of the spending on health care.

Mr Wilson spent some time on on-call in emergency and asked me to guarantee a solution to that problem by the end of July. That is not a commitment that I can make or that anyone can make because, as I have said on so many occasions, it is a problem that is caused by actions by physicians, by hospitals, and cannot be resolved simply by them or by the ministry. It has to be within the discussion framework of all of us.

I am delighted the OMA has agreed to resume discussions. They have agreed to come back to that table. They said they would come back with no preconditions, but they have in fact put on a precondition, which is that the discussions must only be within the framework of our 1991 agreement with the Ontario Medical Association.

I have to say, and I will be saying to them, that it is the 1993 agreement, which places limits on the cap on total physician billing, that has to be the framework within which those discussions take place, because we do not have additional money to put into fee-for-service physicians or into alternative payment plans for physicians. As we get into the discussions, we have to look at what we are now paying to physicians within that \$3.8-billion budget and see how we can reallocate it in order to provide emergency coverage.

The 1991 agreement only contemplated bilateral discussions or negotiations, including the dispute resolution mechanism, which would bind the government to potentially increase compensation and add new money to the envelope that was already agreed to in 1993. That would have to be at the expense of other professionals or as a result of a decrease in services, and that again we are not able to contemplate.

The Ontario Medical Association has the ability through the central tariff committee to make schedule changes—and it could do that any time—that would enable physicians to be compensated for their emergency room coverage at a rate that would make it worth their while to be there. In fact, there have been changes recommended by the central tariff committee on a

number of procedures to reduce their relative weight in relation to other procedures. They could also use the same mechanism to address the issue of compensation for rural emergency coverage.

Having said that, however, we are more than happy to work to develop the terms of reference, including a time frame, and call the parties together to come to a resolution.

I suspect we'll have some more discussions on long-term care—that was one of the issues Mr Wilson raised—and on the question of multiservice agencies. Certainly some of my colleagues may want to get into that. Again, I remind him and the committee of our commitment to the provision of services in a non-profit way.

The fact that there have been so many for-profit agencies developed throughout the long-term care system I think is a reflection of the fact that hitherto long-term care has not been considered an integral part of the health care system. It has been part of community and social services. It evolved as a result of actions by communities saying, "We need these services," by, in some cases, not-for-profit small groups coming together to provide those services, and in some cases agencies responding in the marketplace to meet those needs.

What we are doing through our long-term care reform is clearly indicating our recognition of the need for long-term care to be part of the health care system and therefore provide it in a not-for-profit manner. That is also very clearly the preference of the consumers, the clients, especially the seniors of this province, and our policy responds to that.

I'm always concerned when I hear the allegation that the way we are intending to expand and reform long-term care will dissuade volunteers from being part of the system, because nothing could be further from the truth. The planning, the decisions, the recommendations as to how long-term care is going to be delivered in each district, is not being done by the ministry. It's being done by district health councils, which are themselves volunteers bodies, volunteer boards that have taken on a very real responsibility and are being asked to take on more by this ministry, which they are gratefully agreeing to do because they agree it is better that they have the decision-making role and that the recommendations to the minister come from them as opposed to being centrally driven.

I am enormously impressed by the magnitude of the volunteer effort that is going into that planning around the province and that is rallying to the district health councils and to their efforts to speak to not just long-term care but also mental health reform, the cancer strategy and so many of the other initiatives that are changing health care within this province.

The role of volunteers on the boards and in the provision of services through the multiservice agencies is integral to being sensitive to the needs of consumers and to making sure the delivery system is driven by consumers, and their role on the board will of course be as volunteers.

Both critics have talked about health cards, one saying, "I think it's time we had a new health card, but we ought



to get into a smart card and a more extensive card,” and my critic from the official opposition saying she didn’t think this was a good initiative for us to get into.

I view the move to a new health card as very much part of the need to have better data, because we don’t have good data now—ICES was correct in identifying that—and we will only have it when we have a better handle on the registration system and when we are in a position to take advantage of new technology as it becomes readily available and usable by way of smart cards.

The difficulty with moving at this juncture to a smart card that would encompass a great deal of information on the card is that we don’t have the technology out there in all the providers’ offices to take advantage of that technology if it were on the card. One of the reasons we are proposing a five-year renewal cycle on the cards is precisely so we have the flexibility to take advantage of new technology when we have the ability to read that new technology in the hands of all the providers of care. There’s no point in making an enormous investment in having a computer chip on the health card if not all the providers of health care have the technology to read it, and we are not in a position at this point to make that available around the province.

I believe the advice of the private sector in how to implement the health card and how to make it secure and what the best system would be has been invaluable, as we have done extensive work and preparation for the announcement I made with respect to a new health card, and I can assure the members of the committee that that work is continuing as we prepare to introduce the new health card, and to be clearer on the methods of implementation and the timetable for that, which I hope to be later this year.

I’m shocked to find Mr Wilson mention that it is in the government’s hands to bring Bill 119 to a conclusion. I wish it were so. At each weekly leaders’ meeting, our House leader raises with the third party: “Can we call 119 this week and get the discussions in committee of the whole completed so we can move to third reading?” and is constantly told: “No, we need a great deal more time to debate it.”

We have not wanted to move to time allocation on this bill. It is a bill that has had broad public support throughout the province and I think has support from all three parties. It is being held up by two members who have a particular concern for their constituents, which is their legitimate right, on the basis of the loss of jobs, but who have had from me constant reassurance that the packaging provisions in the legislation, based on the amendments from the member for Carleton and his intervention at the committee level, are not going to result in this province moving unilaterally to plain packaging and therefore to the loss of jobs in the constituencies concerned, I hope will enable them to not delay this legislation any further, because it is certainly my intention that we should have it in a state to be proclaimed by the end of this session, and I hope that my critic in the third party will contribute to that.

1700

Let me stop there, Mr Chair, and thank my colleagues for having raised so clearly so many points that they wish to discuss in the time remaining. I’m sure we’ll come back to many of them in greater detail than I’ve been able to comment. As I’ve said, we have somebody here now who can go into in more detail the savings on mental health if that would be the desire of Mrs Sullivan in the next time allocation.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I wanted to clarify the minister’s understanding of my statement with respect to the health cards. I am an extraordinarily strong proponent of an information system that will provide data for care management, administrative and planning and research purposes. What I think that the decision of the minister, with respect to the introduction of a photo ID with one new piece of information being an expiry date, has done is to create and add simple madness into what should be a fully integrated and comprehensive information network system that can be introduced over a period of time with private sector participation in the capital funding and provide significant benefit to the health care system. I see no added benefit to the health care system with this kind of interim measure that the minister describes precisely as an interim measure.

**The Chair:** I would like to resolve a couple of procedural matters for the committee at this time.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Would it be appropriate to ask a question of the minister, based on what I’ve heard since I came in? Is that possible?

**The Chair:** It is, rather, by time allocation, but I’m in the hands of the committee, and I’m seeking its direction with respect to the first question I generally ask at this time, which is, shall we stack the votes? If there’s general agreement, we will do that.

The second question is if we wish to proceed in a time-allocated fashion or do we wish to introduce a subject and questioning can occur through the direction of the Chair.

**Mr Larry O’Connor (Durham-York):** I think the Chair is usually quite reasonable as far as if there is a question that somebody wants to tag on to someone else’s question, there’s usually a little bit of liberty in the committee so that we can have that happen. So in a time-allocated fashion, I think that we could probably do that and achieve an orderly procedure here.

**The Chair:** Okay. This is actually a matter for the committee, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Can I have a question, or is that not appropriate?

**The Chair:** If it’s for clarification, absolutely.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I’d just like a clarification as to whether, in your time allocation, it was your usual procedure to deal with one subject and complete all questions on that topic, for example, mental health, so that officials could be here for that discussion and know that the subject had been dealt with when that round had been completed.

**The Chair:** That’s my next point, Minister. At this point, the answer is that that’s possible, but because you go to time allocation, you sometimes run out of time



when people have been asked to be here. The Chair is open to any requests from members to have any specific agency, board or commission affiliated under the aegis of the Ministry of Health to be present. Any matter within the estimates is of course an item that can be dealt with before the estimates committee. So if there are specific ministry officials or, as I say, agencies, boards or commissions whose presence you wish to request, please let the Chair know. The sooner we can hear that, the sooner we can make those arrangements. To the degree that we can best coordinate the attendance of those staff, we will endeavour to do that.

I had one request from Ms Sullivan with respect to the administration of mental health services in Ontario. Ministry staff whom I communicated that to have made arrangements for this afternoon, but that doesn't mean we would finish our questions on mental health at this point.

**Mr O'Connor:** I wondered if it might be possible that we hear from officials from ICES, as Mr Wilson had brought it up and that might be something that could lead to some very fruitful discussion.

**The Chair:** Very well. I appreciate that request. We can receive some of those requests as we proceed. We're a bit of a corporal's guard today and we'll be flexible in that regard.

If that's the case, we've had prior agreement to the best utilization of the next 45-or-so minutes before we're called to the House for a vote. We have, by mutual agreement, allocated the balance of this afternoon's time to Ms Sullivan as leading the questions. So the Chair just wishes to set out the balance of the agenda for the afternoon.

**Mrs Sullivan:** With respect to the mental health issues, I think this is an important matter because of the significant change in the funding. I don't know that we will want to spend the entire time this afternoon on mental health issues when Mr Wilson isn't here.

**The Chair:** Ms Sullivan, first of all, I'd like to indicate that the Chair's rule, and it's based in parliamentary rule, is that we don't make a lot of discussion around the attendance and non-attendance of individuals, because it happens to all of us from time to time.

Secondly, it's your 45 minutes, Ms Sullivan, and you can order it up any way you choose. We're in your hands, once we recognize you, in terms of the questioning that you wish. Any number of ministry staff are available to you for your questioning, as is the minister, for the next 45 minutes. No decision has been made to dismiss any group or individuals from the ministry, to say we will no longer wish to deal with them. Once we stack the votes, it's implicit that all matters are available for discussion until the final votes are taken. The opposite of stacking the vote is dealing with all matters and votes. We have five votes by panel and on occasion we've been known to do it that way. Then you cannot go back, because then we vote and sign off a section and we don't return to that section. So all matters are open for discussion for the seven hours or whatever is remaining. Is that helpful?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** I would like to recognize Ms Sullivan. Please proceed. Could any staff members who are called please identify themselves for Hansard and state their name and their position within the ministry. That would be helpful for Hansard.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As I start, I think it's important to recognize that members of the Legislature and members of the public have high expectations of awaited reform in the delivery of mental health services. It becomes a matter of concern when a 7% chop is seen in a budget.

This estimates period is a useful time to bring the issues forward and have a pretty thorough update on what's occurring in mental health reform, on what new services are being put into place and on where changed emphasis is occurring, because, frankly, we don't have any other vehicle through the legislative process. There are no bills coming forward. There's no other activity legislatively that places mental health services onto a public agenda. In fact, I guess the only time since I've been elected that mental health services have been on a public agenda has been peripherally through the Consent to Treatment Act and the Advocacy Act, where the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office was involved in that discussion. In fact, that's a question we want to have answered: Are they going to be transferred to the Advocacy Commission or not? But I think it will be useful to have a fair exploration and almost, if you like, a briefing now on the mental health issues and the direction the ministry is taking.

1710

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps I could ask Jessica Hill, who's the acting assistant deputy minister, mental health, to come forward. Let me say that I really welcome the opportunity to have this kind of discussion, because I agree, Mrs Sullivan, that we don't have a forum in the Legislature.

Frankly, our mental health reform has been proceeding apace and very well received, based on the Graham report and the other directions that were clear we now have a clear policy framework to guide a consumer-focused reform, a framework that will ensure that all mental health services work together to improve access to services and shift services to the community.

Perhaps I could also share with the committee that at 6 o'clock tonight I will be hosting an event for Nobel prize winner Dr Michael Smith, who won the Nobel prize for his work on schizophrenia. We're very proud that he has donated his prize to the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry for the development of a chair on schizophrenia. The ads were in the press today. I think that's a tribute to some of the research being done in this province, a lot of it within the provincial psychiatric hospitals, the kind of work that we're very proud of, want to see continue and consider to be a very important part of our mental health system.

If I could ask Miss Hill to perhaps respond to your request for a progress report on where we're at, that would, I'm sure, lead us into the financial elements of it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the estimates committee, Miss Hill.

**Ms Jessica Hill:** Thank you. Jessica Hill, acting

assistant deputy minister for mental health programs and services group.

To begin with, mental health reform began with putting forward a policy document entitled *Putting People First*, which definitely built on the Graham report and the planning that was undertaken by the district health councils.

Perhaps the most significant addition in the *Putting People First* document was the identification of key services and supports that we feel need to be in place at a local, regional and provincial level. The key services that were identified were case management, crisis response, support services to housing and consumer initiatives.

In the last year, I would say the ministry has been actively working on implementation planning with a wide range of working groups that have involved stakeholders throughout the community on each working group. There are many working groups, but a quick list would be as follows.

**Community services and supports:** That working group developed a set of policy and planning guidelines which will help district health councils develop the appropriate approach to the services I described.

Another working group looked at the labour strategy that is needed to create an integrated mental health system, which is a very complex undertaking, since we have several forms of employer-employee relationships within our mental health system, which has clearly been one of the factors that have prevented it becoming a system, but a group of individual services.

Another working group, called the multi-year plan work group, has been working towards the development of a multi-year plan for mental health reform, since the initiative was always perceived to be one that would take 10 years, as a time frame, for planning and shifting.

Another set of working groups looked at health promotion, ethno-racial mental health needs and women's mental health needs.

We've also developed a working group looking at the relationship between planning for housing services and planning for support services.

Many of these working groups are finishing up now. We have sent out recently an implementation vision and the first part of our multi-year plan for consultation to over 1,200 recipients across the province. We are planning to release our full multi-year plan in the fall. It will include an information strategy, a fiscal strategy and a labour strategy, as well as all our work group reports.

It may be seen that we've been involved in a lot of planning and we haven't actually put much service in place, but with the policy framework it became clear that implementation planning was as important an activity that we begin with to guide district health councils as they look at the challenge of both restructuring services, redesigning services and reallocating resources from institutions to community. These tools will be extremely welcomed by our district health council partners.

We also held a forum with mental health consumers, families and providers and district health councils about

a month ago, where we focused on our next steps. This was a provincial forum and it was one of the most, I think, exciting events and was well received because it focused largely on how to make the partnerships work. Now, when there are obviously not new funds to invest in large service expansion, the question of how we do our business and how we more effectively provide services to consumer survivors and family members is going to have to be a considerable focus of our efforts. So this was really directed at all types of service providers, as well as family members and consumers.

I have to say that one of the most exciting responses was to recognize that people are aware that in this time of fiscal constraint, the challenges to implement mental health reform have a great deal to do with changing our relationships to each other, and that there is a belief that a great deal can be done.

So I think that's probably some of the concrete activities we've been involved in. The other one I would mention is, we did invest some new resources into support services to housing, and I can certainly at another occasion provide you with the details of which services we invested in to enhance our support services to housing this year. As well, I can provide you with a specific report on all the activities under mental health reform that have been taking place over the last year.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'd appreciate those reports. I think that would be useful. Could you talk for a few minutes about directions with respect to actual operation of psychiatric services, including hospitals?

**Ms Hill:** Yes. One of the activities we've been undertaking with the psychiatric hospitals is looking at the fiscal constraints that we are working within and the multi-year expenditure target we've been working with. From last year's fiscal year through this year and into the next year, there have been a number of efforts at looking at efficiencies, looking at opportunities to restructure the support services—not the clinical services, but the support services—to the facilities. We were able to meet our expenditure target last year of \$5 million, and the planning we've been undertaking has been to focus on further opportunities for operational savings.

The other thing that has taken place is that there are a number of communities where there are restructuring activities under way where the provincial psychiatric hospitals are participating in the restructuring discussions regarding psychiatric services in those communities. London and St Thomas is the one that of course is probably the largest restructuring within our own system, looking at rationalizing between London and St Thomas, but there are also activities taking place in both Brockville and Thunder Bay where our psychiatric hospitals are participating in restructuring discussions, either around acute care services and who is the most appropriate provider in that community to provide the service, or to do with overall rationalization of hospital services. So those are two other restructuring activities.

Our belief is that we are working towards our targets from a perspective of looking, for the most part, at restructuring of those support services and opportunities for efficiencies, but we're also looking at restructuring of



programs that either move to more community supports with fewer inpatient beds or amalgamations of wards, that kind of response, but always from the perspective of, how does it fit with the mental health reform and who are the other appropriate partners for the discussion? So those are the explorations we're undertaking right now.

1720

**Mrs Sullivan:** Just to move back to the provincial psychiatric hospitals, has there been consideration of moving those hospitals from the aegis of the province and into a community-based—maybe this is a policy question for the minister. Have you been considering that kind of approach with respect to governance of the provincial psychiatric hospitals?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We have certainly not at this point been considering that. There has been a suggestion, I think, as part of the restructuring in Thunder Bay that that might be one way of dealing with it there, but it has not been a decision we've contemplated. We've been working with the district health councils and with the hospitals on mental health reform without contemplating any change in their status or responsibilities at this stage.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Another issue that I see as highly problematic, and I've of course had this kind of constituency problem, is the linkage between children's mental health services and those provided in the adult system. I believe it's a serious problem that the person who is coming out of the children's mental health services—first of all, if they can get them adequately in the beginning. I have one of my constituents who finally found secure psychiatric services at the Syl Apps Youth Centre in a kind of correctional environment, and they do other things wonderfully well there, but it drives me mad when I see some of the difficulties patients and families face with respect to finding a place as a young person and then, when an age limit hits, all of a sudden having no place again. I just wonder what the ministry's approach to dealing with that kind of issue is.

**Ms Hill:** We did recognize within mental health reform that we need to definitely pay attention to the relationship issues or the conflicts between the Ministry of Community and Social Services policies and our own policies with respect to children's mental health.

We are beginning a children's mental health working group specifically addressing this question of the relationships between the policies and the programs and where we can resolve some of the problems that have been identified as long-standing within the field. The Ministry of Community and Social Services is leading that work group and we are participating in it from our group, because we believe that we definitely have to build a consistent response with our adult mental health system and the ministry's role with respect to children's mental health. That is beginning in the next month or so.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Is there a formal process, say, with respect to linking with the children-at-risk policy directions that are coming forward, or is it that formal in terms of setting up a long-term ongoing mechanism?

**Ms Hill:** Well, I think in the first instance it's an attempt to look at the current policies that are not work-

ing well and are in fact in conflict and trying to resolve those. I think probably out of that we will be looking at questions of ongoing relationships: how we build on the ongoing mechanisms to ensure we're not working at cross purposes. We are also working on a similar initiative with the Ministry of Community and Social Services around the dual diagnosis population, and we recognize, certainly with that group, that we do need to build some ongoing working relationships and ongoing mechanisms to ensure, especially if we're not the lead ministry, that we're cognitive of the piece that's not part of our ongoing work. We are both aware, certainly with that initiative, that if you don't have an ongoing mechanism, it's very easy to move away from the needs of that population. I suspect with children's mental health a similar kind of discussion and opportunity will have to be pursued.

**Mrs Sullivan:** The dual diagnosis issue is one that's also problematic. Many people from my area are served at Oaklands, both developmentally disabled but many of them are dually diagnosed, and one of the difficulties the residents and their families see is a hell-bent-for-leather deinstitutionalization emphasis when in fact what has been built up is a community of people sharing similar problems and who have lived together for years and years and see Oaklands, by example, as their home. I wonder what the Ministry of Health's position is with respect to those kinds of issues.

**Ms Hill:** The dual diagnosis initiative has resulted in the funding of, I believe, four pilots, and I can provide some more detailed information for you about where those pilots are, focusing specifically on how to strengthen the relationship between health care providers with knowledge of mental illness and mental health problems, behavioural issues, with the field that serves the developmentally handicapped. By building those relationships you can put in place a very effective response to those who are dually diagnosed.

If my memory serves me correctly, the communities where those projects are are in Ottawa, Toronto, and there are two others; I can't remember which, but I will provide you with a note through the committee on that. The results of those initiatives have been very exciting and those communities feel it has been a very, very worthwhile initiative. It's the best use of both sets of resources.

We also have within our psychiatric hospitals dually diagnosed programs, and they are really aiming to ensure that those with the most severe problems are provided with adequate in-patient assessment and stabilization and often medication adjustment so that they can then return to the community with adequate supports and in a sense in a better position to live in the community. Those programs we see as being part of our role within the psychiatric hospital system. Again, we're talking about the most severe population in this instance.

The other role that those units play is an educational role with the Ministry of Community and Social Services program area to ensure that there is continual education of those people in the developmentally handicapped service provider field about issues of severe mental illness and how this population needs to be cared for a



little differently and cooperatively. Those initiatives are under way, and we are discussing with the Ministry of Community and Social Services that after these pilots are completed and we get the results of the evaluation which has been ongoing, and if the early results prove to be true for all the pilots, somehow we need to ensure that there's a mechanism for supporting this collaboration between the fields on a province-wide basis.

Generally speaking, I think what both systems are recognizing is that very few people who enter the system now come with one set of needs, they come with complex sets of needs, and we have to be more effective at integrating our service responses and learning from each other.

**Mrs Sullivan:** The next question is also a question for the minister. What decision is being made with respect to the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office? Is it going to be transferred to the Advocacy Commission?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd ask my deputy, Ms Mottershead, to respond to that.

**Mrs Margaret Mottershead:** We have a memorandum of understanding with the PPAO, and it was signed over two years ago, that has within it the notion of the transfer to the Advocacy Commission. The memorandum of understanding recognized the planning process that was going on at the time for the establishment of the commission, and the need to have an integrated program was also seen as desirable at that time. Therefore, the language in the memorandum of understanding is very explicit that this will be considered.

There have been discussions going on over the last several months. We've had a number of issues raised by the patients in some of our own psychiatric facilities. We've had discussions with the PPAO executive director and the committee that is an advisory committee to the PPAO. Everyone has a slightly different understanding and need, so we're really trying to sort through those issues before making a final determination. But there is a basis and a starting point which is included in the memorandum of understanding, and that is that a transfer would be desirable but consultation would be contemplated before that happened.

1730

**Mrs Sullivan:** My understanding is that the patients would prefer to maintain the existing situation.

**Mrs Mottershead:** Certainly one of the spokespersons for the patient group is very much of the view that they would rather have a separate organization to deal with their own specific needs. We are well aware of those issues and have received a lot of correspondence.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As we all have. Basically, you're saying: "Wait for our response. We haven't decided yet."

**Mrs Mottershead:** We're talking about it.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Okay. One of the things we know, particularly in this economically strained environment, is that joblessness and the stress associated with that contribute to mental health problems. I heard about a very interesting study taken in Britain when Margaret Thatcher was introducing downsizing and cutbacks in government. The day the pink slips arrived was the day

there was an enormous blip in cardiac arrests and in appointments with psychiatric institutions and facilities and professionals being made. It's fascinating; I'd love to get my hands on it just to see what the impact is.

But public health officials in communities, usually through the public health units and so on, have been attempting to deal with those issues; community agencies have been attempting to deal with some of those issues. My sense is that a lot of the activity is the spinning of wheels. People are trying to do their very best to deal with the questions and to ensure that there are supports in place, but have problems doing so; individuals have difficulty finding where the supports are. I wonder if you'd just talk for a few minutes about how you see the almost preventive mental health services being put into place and what the emphasis is on that aspect of mental health.

**Ms Hill:** At this stage we are definitely in the planning phase around health promotion and mental health. The other thing I'd say about that is that the health promotion report, that we've only seen drafts of at this stage, focuses very much on community mental health activities, looking at strategies to discourage violence against women, looking at strategies to discourage racist behaviour and attitudes, looking at suicide prevention, those kinds of strategies and initiatives.

I don't think we're far down the line in terms of being concrete about what should be the strategies we put into place. Definitely, the pressures on the system range probably more along the acute mental health side, the support to people with a severe mental illness. I would have to say that is our initial priority.

However, I know that in the discussions we've had about the multi-year and reallocation, we recognize that as we look at reallocating resources to case management services, crisis response, supports to housing, we also need to ensure that we are providing some initial enhancements or resources to health promotion, to women's mental health and to ethnoracial mental health specifically. There are real concerns that we address those issues as well, and some of the ways in which we may approach service design for the severely mentally ill or acutely mentally ill may not be exactly what ethnoracial communities would like to see in place, or women's mental health programs. That will probably affect how we will share the dollar, but I think we see it equally important that we begin to seed as much as we can as we move through the 10 years.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me just add to that response, because the member raised the very real issue of determinants of health, which I referred to in my opening remarks, and we all know that economic security contributes to good health. I accept her contention that at the time of layoffs there is undue stress, both physical and mental. That's why our whole emphasis has been on the creation, through Jobs Ontario and other economic activities, of a healthy economy as the foundation for a healthy society.

As I look to the prevention of mental illness, it seems to me that a lot of the activities that are required are in all ministries and in all spheres of activity as well as

through our mental health program. I often use the example of my own constituency office where for years I spent a lot of time dealing with tenants who were wrestling with the uncertainty and, if they were seniors, with the incredible worry of, would their rent go up an enormous amount at the end of the year or would they suddenly get a notice to quit because the apartment building had been sold?

While nobody would think our rent control legislation was mental health legislation, the effects are there because we don't now have seniors living their lives in a state of uncertainty about whether they will have their home for the foreseeable future, just as, dealing with justice issues, employment equity also contributes to people's security. As we know, through the work of the Premier's councils, that healthy, supportive families and communities are a very strong determinant of health, legislation that facilitates the development of those healthy families and communities is all a contribution to good mental health.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Can I go into specific budget items, the social contract savings with respect to psychiatric services of well over \$12 million? That's on page 123 of the estimates book.

**Ms Hill:** I'm not sure what the question is.

**Mrs Sullivan:** One of the savings under the social contract, \$12,200,000, is identified as a social contract savings for psychiatric services. I'd like to know what the impact of the social contract was in service delivery, in availability of patient services, because in this case we are dealing with the acute and heavy-demand care load, how the Rae days were met and what effect that had on patient services and care, and how many, if any, service providers were declared critical.

**Ms Hill:** I'm going to have to get back to you with the specifics of what happened last year and what the approach is for this coming year. There are different specific targets for days between the two years. Last year we did manage our services: There were not reductions in clinical services. That was achieved through tremendous challenges around scheduling and some backfilling for critical services, but next year we are looking at, as I said, efficiencies and opportunities to try to achieve these dollar targets without threatening our clinical services. There may be some program restructuring to do that, but we're certainly attempting, as much as possible, to do that through the efficiencies.

**Mrs Mottershead:** Can I add to that for clarification that what happens as you go through these estimates is that the salaries and wages and standard accounts are assigned to each program. In fact, when you're managing a ministry, the salary budgets can be aggregated; therefore there is some room so that, if there are particular pressures in certain areas, you might assign a higher target in another area so that it alleviates a major problem.

1740

What actually happened in psychiatric services last year is that because of their critical function and essential services, a lot of the work did have to be backed up, with

people taking turns in terms of filling in for social contract days, or actually having to hire people who are on standby or on call for some of those clinical service parts. Therefore, the whole target really wasn't achieved as planned, as a direct result of that.

The target you see there is an assigned target based on the percentage of days required by both the particular OPSEU bargaining unit and the other quasi-bargaining units, and that's the target. That's an estimate. We will certainly try and manage this as part of our discussions with each individual hospital on its specific plans to meet this and the other savings Jessica has mentioned.

**Mrs Sullivan:** What were the actual savings last year in psychiatric services? Would you know that?

**Mrs Mottershead:** I don't have that information broken down per se, but I can get it for you, no question. I don't have it here; it is available in the ministry.

**Mrs Sullivan:** It would be interesting, first of all, to compare the two, but also, can you provide more information on what kinds of program restructuring you'd be anticipating to meet those social contract targets?

**Ms Hill:** It wouldn't be just to meet the social contract savings; it would be to meet the overall targets. What we've asked the hospitals to do is look at scenarios for savings within their facilities of a 5% or a 10% cut. It's a planning exercise to see what the impact would be—it could be 5%, it could be 4%, it could be 6%—but to begin the discussion.

The results of those discussions are not firm yet. We were pleased to see that a great deal can be achieved without touching clinical programs. In some instances the proposals looked at, with some one-time support, shifting to case management teams, which have been initiated in Brockville very effectively and in, I believe, both Cornwall and Ottawa. The desire is to create more of those teams.

In some instances, it is looking at the psychogeriatric population within our facilities to determine whether there are opportunities. This is not something new. This process of streamlining the service for the psychogeriatric population and ensuring that we play more of a tertiary, consultative role to the long-term care system and the care and management of care for people who require a different kind of facility has been going on for a number of years in our hospitals and is part of their operating and strategic plans. It's really taking those strategic plans and the operating plans and saying, "Are there things that we could move more quickly to achieve?" as opposed to deciding there's going to be a radical departure from those documents.

No decisions have been made. We're very much in the discussion, information-gathering phase to determine what the opportunities and the consequences and impacts are so that we are making very concrete recommendations.

**Mrs Sullivan:** We'd appreciate being kept up to date on those issues.

The other issue, of the psychogeriatric patient in the nursing home, is one that's becoming increasingly difficult in that the acuity of the problems has increased inordinately. I don't know what the measures are, but



certainly the evidence is that the patients are older, sicker and more disturbed. The formulae with respect to the classification system aren't necessarily meeting the needs and the linkages with psychiatric services elsewhere aren't necessarily in place. I wonder if you could just comment on that a bit further.

**Ms Hill:** One of our working groups is a long-term care mental health working group that is focused specifically on the psychogeriatric population. One of the things they found is that there are many people in nursing homes who look identical to the people in our psychiatric facilities. Then again, there may be some people in the nursing homes who have difficulty maintaining their tenure there because of incidents or episodes.

The things a psychiatric hospital offers that have been identified to us as a major need on the long-term care side are some secure, locked space for people who are suffering from Alzheimer and have a tendency to wander; the second is walking space, pacing space, which our hospitals offer; a third is trained expertise in terms of being able to care for the patients who may have severe behavioural problems.

What we're trying to do is say, "You may not need to be in our facilities to have all of those supports to your programs." That definitely has been a very positive relationship, where the psychiatric hospital has played a very strong outreach team approach. Often a person, like the diagnosed population, needs to be assessed, stabilized, maybe some medication modified and some opportunity to be in a psychiatric facility for a short term, as opposed to using the psychiatric hospital as a place to live for years on end. What we're trying to do is restructure that relationship so that the psychiatric services are providing the right support.

Clearly, the psychogeriatric work group report, or the long-term care mental health work group report, speaks both to that population and how we might better use the resources to support the long-term care system, but the other is to ensure that those older people with a mental health problem are identified more effectively by the health care system generally and are responded to effectively in terms of depression, that kind of thing.

Really, many of the things we're doing or talking about are ensuring that what we're doing is a correct support and that the right kind of expertise is provided to another part of the system, as opposed to just saying we have to have all these people in our facilities.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me build on that. Mrs Sullivan has identified the need for long-term care reform, and as I talk to district health councils about their planning, I'm tremendously encouraged by the congruence of their mental health planning exercise in their long-term care and the linkages that are happening there in the different districts, as well as what's occurring in a number of nursing homes, which is the development of facilities, whether it be for Alzheimer or other illnesses, within the nursing home.

I was in a wonderful facility in Whitby, Fairview Lodge, run by the municipality, where the Alzheimer unit

had developed a secure outdoor area where members could walk and was really providing psychogeriatric services there, obviously with linkages to the professional system and Whitby Psychiatric Hospital. It's those kinds of connections that are emerging.

The other critical element of long-term care reform that will make a difference here is a more appropriate assessment of people's needs, because as both you and Ms Hill identified, there are inappropriate placements at this point, for whatever reason.

So I'm not sure I see shifting, necessarily, the people who are now in institutions, but as we get to a way of being able to do more appropriate assessments before people are placed, we will then find we can put people and have them live both where they can get the kind of help and support they need for their particular condition and in the most appropriate placement for them, given that condition.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I don't want to get too much into long-term care issues today because I think we'll have ample opportunity in the debate on the new bill to discuss those issues. But certainly in my community, where we don't have long-term care beds, we have the lowest availability in the province, and those facilities that are available have to link with Hamilton—we're in Oakville and Burlington—and we have very, very big problems with respect to an increasing, frequently dually diagnosed, psychogeriatric population with very severe problems—a very difficult time coping with those people.

Too frequently as these issues are addressed there's a focus that assumes that the supports and the expertise of the major centres are going to be available everywhere in Ontario, and it isn't the case.

We have a vote, so there's one last question I want to raise here, and I'm sure the other parties will have some questions to raise on this issue. With the rationalization of St Thomas Psychiatric Hospital and London Psychiatric Hospital, you're predicting \$15 million worth of savings. Why would that not have been put into the system? Are you anticipating, therefore, that in another year that money would go back into the system in another way?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Certainly we identified some years ago the ability to make \$45 million in savings, I think it was, mostly from administration and rationalization within the psychiatric hospitals. Of that, we have at this point committed to a reinvestment of up to \$5 million in community-based services. The actual programs that will be developed as a result of that I think are all part of the exercise in planning that Ms Hill has identified that is currently under way.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister, for your response, and thank you, Ms Sullivan, for your questions. As we have a vote very shortly, we will adjourn the committee at this time. We have just over six hours remaining in our Health estimates. The committee will resume sitting on Tuesday, June 14.

The committee adjourned at 1751.











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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 14 June 1994

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 14 juin 1994

Standing committee on  
estimates

Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses

Ministry of Health

Ministère de la Santé

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 14 June 1994

Mardi 14 juin 1994

The committee met at 1558 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We have reconvened to continue with the estimates of the Ministry of Health. We have six hours, three minutes remaining.

I welcome the minister and the critics. When we left off, Ms Sullivan had the floor. Before I recognize the third-party critic, does the minister has any written responses or any short responses to any of the questions that were tabled?

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** No, not at this point, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** Fine. If that's the case, Mr Wilson, it's a 20-minute allocation.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** Oh, 20 minutes?

**The Chair:** What would you like? Do you want to do a half-hour segment?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I wouldn't mind.

**The Chair:** Done. Get going.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, perhaps you could bring us up to date on the 1993 OMA-government agreement. In reading some of the medical journals and the OMA journal, it seems to me that when it comes to a number of things the government committed to in this agreement, the government has been a little lax in living up to some of the conditions set therein. I don't know if you need any staff to help go through this.

One of the issues, of course, that has hit the media recently is incorporation. The mention in the agreement is that the government would move to introduce legislation to allow physicians to incorporate in this province. It's a bit disturbing, and I see you've had to do a bit of damage control when the Star last week made it known that the government had done a secret report for your eyes only with respect to the cost and some of the legal questions concerning the incorporation of physicians.

I was just wondering if you want to take this opportunity to bring us up to date on what is happening, what that report indicates to you and why the government hasn't moved to introduce legislation thus far.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd be very glad to take some time to update the committee on the status of the agreement. It was a very far-reaching agreement. As members will recall, we had the framework agreement signed with the OMA in 1991. Then there was the expenditure reduction exercise that our government embarked upon, which talked about the discounting of physicians who set up practice in the areas where there was an oversupply of physicians.

We hoped to address the distribution of physicians by encouraging them to settle in those areas or domains where we lacked physicians. There was very strong reaction in opposition to that proposal. In fact, I think my critics might have contributed to some of the debate around that issue.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** We were certainly very helpful on that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** When we entered into negotiations with the OMA with respect to the social contract, we had on the table the update of the framework agreement of 1991, the expenditure control measures that had been taken, as well as the need to curtail the growth in expenditures on the salaries of public servants, of those paid from the public treasury, which of course included physicians and other professionals.

The negotiations were very far-reaching and a number of significant agreements were reached. Let me just quickly go through them and then focus on the one that I know has been of interest today. One of the agreements was with respect to third-party services, something which has not been covered by OHIP for some time but on which there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to whether they would be paid for by the person seeking the certificate of good health for employment or summer camp or whatever or the person requiring that such a certificate be produced. Our agreement was that in fact the responsibility lay with the person requiring the third-party services.

We have done a fair amount of work internally around that. First of all, there was Bill 50, which gave us the statutory authority for doing that and which, as you know, received royal assent on December 14, 1993. There have been internal discussions to look at which regulations within ministries require health examinations and therefore doctors' examinations, which might be obsolete or we might no longer need or do it another way. That has been ongoing.

Then there was discussion with the OMA to identify what statutory obligations could be eliminated, but also the way in which we could write a regulation that would enable us to require the third party to pay and for the OMA to revise its guide to billing for uninsured services. That has taken a fair amount of time, but a great deal of work has been done and we are well on the way to completing the requirements of that portion of the agreement.

Another significant element in the agreement was the requirement to bring in a new health card. I know again both my critics and the Ontario Medical Association believed we had not moved as quickly as we had hoped to on that initially. I took the position that it was import-

ant to get it right. Again we did an enormous amount of research and preparation for implementing a new card and I was able to announce on May 3 that we will be having a new photo health card. We are now moving to implement that, so that part of the agreement has been lived up to.

**Distribution measures:** As I reminded you, one of the early initiatives was the attempt to deal with the distribution of physicians by discounting, so finding an alternative to that was very key to the negotiations from our point of view. We negotiated that one of the ways in which that would be done would be direct contracts in traditionally hard-to-service areas. Again, we have had long discussions with the OMA as to the terms and the wording of those contracts. I think we both acknowledge that that has been ongoing.

The deadline that was in the agreement was October 31, 1993, but again discussions have been ongoing and I would hope that the OMA would acknowledge, as I do, that we set time lines in the agreement without perhaps either party understanding the complexity of the issues and the amount of work that needed to be done in order to in fact make them a reality.

Continuing medical education was another element and that was funds to be transferred to the OMA. That has been done, and the OMA has made a proposal as to how to continue that education program. That is under review by the ministry.

There was an agreement with respect to locums and, again, the funds were transferred by the ministry to the OMA and the OMA is now proceeding with implementation of that.

The public education was very much a part of it and our extremely successful program in London, Ontario—a town I just came from and nobody has colds there today, it's very warm—was an education and health promotion initiative that, the committee I know will be interested to know, recently won a prize for the advertising of that campaign as well. So that has been completed.

There was to be a task force on the funding and looking at the future of medical care. That has been established and is up and running.

There were to be some changes to the schedule of benefits with respect to delisting and that has been implemented. You will recall the work of the committee that was set up to hear the public and to make recommendations. Again, we accepted their recommendations, so that has been in place.

There were some other schedule changes that have been made or that are under discussion between the ministry and the OMA but, by and large, we are well on the way to implementation of significant portions of that agreement.

The question, of course, was raised around incorporation, and I'm sure the member will recall that there was agreement in principle in schedule 9 of the agreement to the incorporation of physicians with a reference to the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Committee with respect to how that might be accomplished. The press is aware, as I gather the world is now aware, that I have

received the report from PRAC and that is being reviewed. That just occurred on May 30, which was the deadline that they had set to respond to us, so we are again on time on that.

We have their report, and I'm reviewing it. It is in the process, I think, of being translated into French, which we hope to have completed tomorrow, and as soon as that has been completed, it will be transmitted to the Ontario Medical Association. I'm not really at this point in a position to comment, nor do I think I ought to, until the OMA has had an opportunity to review the recommendations.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Minister. I just want to go back to a couple of things that you've said. One is with respect to on-call emergency services and physician distribution measures. Let's take on-call emergency services first. You still have a problem in Red Lake. I gather the hospital there has bought a bit of time through an agreement directly with the physicians, as we're seeing this happening in other areas of the province.

What is the ministry's plan to come to terms with this issue with respect to on-call emergency services, particularly in rural Ontario? Unless you can take some leadership and get a handle on this, the problem seems to be spreading. The tripartite approach doesn't appear to be working at this point.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chairman, I'm not prepared to agree with the member that the tripartite approach can't work. I acknowledge that it hasn't at this point, because it's only tripartite if there are three people at the table. As I've said many times, I sincerely regretted that the OMA, having begun discussions with us and the Ontario Hospital Association last November, then decided in May that they would not continue any more. I am delighted that they are now prepared to come back and be part of those discussions.

We are at this point discussing with them and with the OHA the terms of reference of reconstituting that committee. The OHA has asked us if we can come to a conclusion by July 31. That would certainly be my wish, and I continue to hope that, with goodwill on all sides, that could happen.

**1610**

In the last couple of days, last Friday I was down in southwestern Ontario and had the opportunity to talk at first hand with hospital administrators wrestling with this problem. I don't think I would agree with you that it's spreading, but I certainly acknowledge that it has been a very long-standing problem. It hasn't just suddenly started. There have been small hospitals topping up the salaries of physicians for quite some time. Just as we are rebeginning the tripartite discussions at the provincial level, so are we working with individual hospitals to try to resolve their problems on an individual basis, and I think it's appropriate to continue on both tracks.

I was encouraged this afternoon when I was in London meeting with the Thames Valley DHC to hear from representatives in the Middlesex area that the arrangements they had worked out with the community, with the physicians and with the hospital for the four-county



hospitals, while less emergency service than they had previously had, in fact seemed to be satisfactory and that they were watching hopefully as to how it would evolve and whether that would set a pattern that would enable them to deal with the problem in the long run.

In other areas there is enormous frustration, because despite attempts to work out agreements with physicians and an enormous amount of goodwill on the part of the hospital administrators, and certainly a willingness by the ministry to sit down and discuss an alternative way of paying the physicians so it is worth their while to cover emergency rooms, it takes two to tango. In some cases, the physicians have not been willing to come to some agreements. But it is, to me, a very major problem, and we have to find a way of resolving it.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Could I ask you, though, what the ministry's position is in these discussions with the OMA? Specifically, is there any budging on your part at all on going outside the \$3.85-billion OHIP pool, and secondly, what are you offering? What do the direct contracts look like for looking after physician supply in underserved areas and with respect to on-call emergency services? What are you offering to these talks?

I just spoke to a large group of physicians in Owen Sound last night, and no one out there is clear what the ministry's position is going into these talks—well, not going into them, but the talks that have been ongoing off and on over the past few months. Can you tell us what your bottom lines are and what you're looking for?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me be very clear, because I'm sorry, I thought I had. First of all, I think it's important to understand that the direct contracts that I mentioned as part of the OMA agreement are not designed to resolve this issue particularly. They are more to deal with supply in the areas where it has been particularly difficult to get physicians. The on-call emergency is a debate about money. The other is as much a debate as to how do you persuade a physician to set up practice in an area like Armstrong, which I guess is one that hasn't had a regular physician or has had a locum on a renewal for quite some time.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** But, Minister, they're very much tied. There's a husband and wife, two physicians, who have a practice for sale in Alliston, and one of the reasons they can't get anyone to come to Alliston, the same as I was told in Owen Sound last night, is because of the emergency coverage also. So the two are very much tied if you're a physician looking to go into an area in rural Ontario.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The contracts that we've been certainly discussing with the OMA are not going to solve the Owen Sound-southwestern Ontario problem. Yes, I have to work within the \$3.85 billion that was negotiated with the OMA, which is the amount we have budgeted for OHIP services in this fiscal year.

If it is to be topped up, as physicians are asking, then it comes from hospital budgets, and that's precisely what the small hospitals have been doing and what we don't want them to continue to do, or it comes from somewhere else within the estimates that you have. I'd be happy to have whatever comment the committee felt it wishes to

make as to areas in our budget where it would see us moving some funding from one particular vote to another.

But as far as I'm concerned, our budget is \$3.85 billion for 22,000 physicians in this province. What we have to do is, within that, look at the equity issues and look at how in fact people are paid. That can be done almost unilaterally by the OMA with respect to the schedule of benefits, which rural physicians have asked for many times within their own organization and of their own bargaining unit. Failing that, the ministry's position is that there can be conversion from the fee-for-service pool of \$3.85 billion to another way of paying physicians.

That has to be not just for emergency room service, in other words, not billing fee-for-service between 9 and 5 and then having a salary on top of that, but looking at how much is in the pool, whether it is, as we said in Red Lake, related to the actual billings of those five physicians or whether we can agree on what the pool ought to be and converting that amount of money into an alternative payment plan. That has been our consistent position in all of these discussions, and the amounts and the mechanisms are what are on the table.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Just with respect to an alternative payment plan, though, it's very difficult to figure out what model you're pursuing. Do you have an ideal one in your mind? Because certainly, in talking to physicians, many of them think it may very well be from 9 to 5 that they're on fee-for-service and then they get an on-call hourly rate or something like that. So do you want to just comment on what the alternative payment plan is? Is it like what we have in Hamilton, where physicians serve in the emergency room? Of course, that's just ER specialists, I guess.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** There are a number of models and variations on models. Perhaps I could ask the deputy to comment on that aspect of things.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** After all these months, I'm assuming you've got this narrowed down and have an objective in these talks.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me be clear: We're open to proposals, creative ideas. We are genuinely negotiating what suits the needs of particular physicians and what meets the demands of their lifestyle, practice, locality and the needs of the hospital. So if there are variations of models, we don't have any predetermined cookie cutter to impose. But let me ask the deputy to comment.

**Mrs Margaret Mottershead:** The discussions that we have been pursuing in Red Lake, as an example, involve an alternative payment plan that would establish a consistent and secure level of remuneration for physicians, in return getting an obligation to provide the full range of community services that they would normally provide through the fee-for-service system, as well as the on-call, and to be available for emergency room coverage. We're wanting to have a plan that is more comprehensive in terms of allowing the stability of income as well as the return for service. That's the kind of model that we have been discussing with Red Lake and with other physician alternative payment arrangements.

There are out there, at a minimum, about 22 different



alternative payment arrangements. They vary and they all reflect the circumstances that were prevalent at the time that the discussions and negotiations took place, and today you may not want to necessarily replicate those particular arrangements. We're trying to be as comprehensive as possible in our discussions so that we have at the forefront the patient and public interest as the first consideration or objective, to make sure that there is comprehensive coverage.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps you should bring him up to date on Red Lake too, before we get into another question, because you're more close to that than I am.

**Mrs Mottershead:** There were meetings with Red Lake last week. The OMA, the Ministry of Health, the Red Lake hospital as well as the Red Lake physicians met and it was a very positive discussion in terms of a solution. Both Ear Falls and Red Lake have determined that within their geography there should be a total of seven physicians, Ear Falls having one physician dedicated to it and Red Lake agreeing to having six.

What remains as part of the discussion is a specific request that was made by the OMA and by the hospital physicians to have a bilateral discussion with the hospital without the ministry present so that they could explore other issues outside, over and above the on-call emergency room. They wanted to deal with procedures, relationships with respect to other hospital services, and we've allowed that to happen. That discussion with the hospital is going on, and we hope to get back next week to serious discussions. We're hopeful we can get an agreement done.

1620

**Hon Mrs Grier:** In the meantime, physicians are resuming their on-call emergency coverage.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Turning to recruitment and retention initiatives, Minister, you covered that briefly. One of the things you mentioned was that the bulk of money had already been given to the OMA. Can you expand on that? I assume that was part of the money that was used to fill in at Red Lake when the locums were required, but it's one part of the agreement that I was never clear on. You handed the money over to the OMA to cover locums where gaps exists in service?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, it was in addition to what the ministry was continuing to do. But let me ask the deputy to address that.

**Mrs Mottershead:** What we decided to do is in two pieces in the agreement. It deals with the OMA and the locums. The OMA had requested the transfer of funds so that it could deal with the short-term, very temporary replacement and relief provided by locums. It's that part of the program that was transferred to them. The locum program that deals with providing longer-term relief in underserved area programs still remains part of the ministry's underserved area. They deal with the very short term, one or two days to cover off for continued medical education or very short-term sick leave.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Was that money in addition to the pool?

**Mrs Mottershead:** Yes.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** With respect to recruitment and retention, are you making any progress? As I said, as you travel throughout the province there still seem to be a great many problems out there with respect to people not wanting to come to rural parts of the province. To be fair, you need the wisdom of Job, I think, to solve this thing, but you've had quite a few months to work with it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I had wondered, Mr Chair, whether having somebody from—

**Mrs Mottershead:** PCCCAR.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** PCCCAR. You say what it stands for. I always get the Cs confused. Anyway, it's a committee headed by Dr John Evans which has been looking at recruitment and human resources. They have been working extensively and have a number of subcommittees and groups working on it as a long-term issue.

We have the immediate problems in those communities that haven't got doctors, but I think they reveal some fundamental flaws in the fact that there has been no human resource planning throughout the system in the past. How can we do it and do it in a way that meets the needs of Ontario? Because this is happening nationally. I'd be more than happy to have somebody here who could speak to that in some detail.

Otherwise, we can give you sort of a rundown of what the committee has been doing and where the work is at. It is tied to both education and how you make sure that you are training people in the right specialties and how you make sure that you are training people so that they are more comfortable operating in isolation, if that's what's going to happen in rural areas, and how you make sure that they are encouraged to locate outside of the urban areas by having part of their training in northern Ontario or rural Ontario. It has been the academic health science centres that have taken the lead in looking at the entire system to see how we can start way back as soon as they enter medical school in order to have some long-term solutions.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Along that line, Minister, you know that five weeks back representatives from the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital, in particular Dr Peter Wells and Mr Maurice Lacerte, and I met with Jodey Porter. I think in my opening remarks I did mention that I would be asking about the status of the ministry's response to the family practice residency program that's being proposed to be run out of Collingwood General and Marine Hospital. Has the ministry got a response to that?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't think we have an official one. My deputy tells me we have referred that proposal to the Evans committee for review. That may be a valuable issue to be addressed if Dr Evans or Dean McMurtry, who's part of that, might be available to come in at one of the other sessions.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Actually, that would be a good idea to deal with this whole issue. I would certainly take you up on that offer, if you want to arrange that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We'd also I think talked about somebody from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences coming in. Has that been scheduled? For tomorrow? Okay.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** That would be quite interesting too.

Not to belabour the point, but just back to on-call emergency services, the OHA had asked that you try and come to a resolution on this matter by the end of July. Do you have a timetable in mind at this point?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I would certainly love to hit that target. Again, I have indicated to ministry officials that we will put whatever time is required into making sure that happens, but it means resolving with the other two parties the precise terms of reference of the committee, what we're talking about, again, to the table. I don't know where we are from scheduling the first meeting.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I have sent out a letter to the OHA and the OMA inviting them to a first meeting and also to have a very frank policy discussion before we continue to schedule any further meetings. I don't know whether you've had an opportunity to read Hansard from the last session, but the minister did indicate that at least one of the parties had already established a precondition to the discussions when in fact they said they were coming into the discussion with no precondition. So we want to make sure there is a solid understanding that everyone is genuinely committed to having a resolution and the framework for that before we get too far down the line.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I also mentioned in my opening remarks our disappointment to a certain extent with your decision surrounding the introduction of new health cards. Although I think the photo ID is on track, again I'd ask you the question, why continue with the magnetic strip and why didn't the ministry go all the way with smart card technology, which I understand was offered to you by the private sector?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Certainly, as I think I said in my response to your opening comments, we think technology is changing very rapidly, and one of the reasons I was anxious to see a renewal cycle for the card is that it enables us to take advantage of technology as it changes. At this point the initiative was designed to deal with fraud and to make sure we had an adequate registration database that had everybody in the province who was entitled to a health card.

The other difficulty is that all the points of the provision of services are not yet equipped with the technology that would enable them to get the best use from a smart card. We are moving to put in place the technology that enables them to deal with a swipe, but we haven't even got to that point yet.

We really are starting from scratch. There wasn't even a division within the ministry looking at these things three years ago, so to in fact put in place both the mechanisms within the ministry and then within hospitals and doctors' offices is a major first step. I know you would feel we should move all the way to a smart card, but if we're not in a position to take advantage of that at all the points of provision, it seems to me that we do the first step first and are ready in five years, if necessary, to move to a more-advanced technology.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Just a couple of points on that. You're aware that Management Board since 1986 has had

sort of a government smart card project up and going. I know it hasn't been enthusiastically received over the years by the Ministry of Health, but to say that it has only been in the last couple of years this has been looked at by the government is just not true at all. In fact, I have people on my own health advisory—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was referring to within the Ministry of Health and the registration base in the investigation elements within our ministry.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** The second thing is just a very direct question. I'm told by some of the major banks that joined the banks together to form a consortium that they had offered to pay for much of the upfront costs of a smart card technology system, that they were going to pay for the hardware, both on the government side and in physicians' offices.

Yet, first of all, they had a very difficult time making the case to the government, and then they did get in at the ADM level and the deputy level, I think, and finally they're at a loss. I talked to someone as late as last Wednesday, a week ago tomorrow, about this, and they're at a complete loss as to why the government didn't take them up on their offer. Do you want to fill us in on why?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** There have been extensive discussions with the private sector about the technology. We'll soon be taking advantage of a lot of their expertise. I don't know whether the deputy or the assistant deputy minister wants to respond to the specifics on that.

1630

**Mrs Mottershead:** Mary Catherine Lindberg is the assistant deputy minister for health insurance and related programs, and she may be in a position to amplify. To my knowledge, there have been, as you say, a number of discussions with a group that was established as a technical advisory group—and it was ad hoc, off and on—advising the ministry on health care issues.

Certain proposals were being discussed, but we never received, to my knowledge, a proposal from any financial institution that actually set out exactly what they're prepared to do and what the return would be to them or others on that particular venture. There were some discussions with them, but no one actually came forward with a specific and firm proposal.

The other element I'd like to add—because you did raise the issue of smart cards and the fact that it has been discussed in government for at least 10 years, and I would acknowledge that—to the issue with the smart card is the fact that you would require a major overhaul in the technology infrastructure of government.

We're not talking about \$1 million or \$100 million; we're talking billions of dollars to deal with that particular catch-up in technology. Therefore, although it's a very tempting idea to pursue, it's just not economical in the very short term, given that other players who would have to be involved and hooked up to this technology wouldn't even have the wherewithal to come up with that kind of investment.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Can I just make one quick point, Mr Chair? I know you're going to cut me off. I appreciate the deputy's response, but I can tell you very clearly that



the private sector and the banking consortium has a very different view of what these discussions have entailed, and that is that they weren't given the access to make their case, that of course they never got to the formal proposal stage because they found all the way along that your government wasn't particularly interested in what they were offering. Now whether it was based on cost or some other reason, that's unclear to them at this point and it's certainly unclear to us.

I'm well aware that an overhaul of government computers is required. I think that the Ministry of Health, though, if you're going to do proper management of the health care system in the future, is going to need good data management and analysis. You're not going to have it with the magnetic strip system, and David Naylor isn't going to live long enough to look at every treatment in the province.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd like to respond, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** The whole process is a response, but he did say it was a final comment, and you're now into the next cycle here.

**Mr Derek Fletcher (Guelph):** You can finish your comments with us.

**The Chair:** Well, people can do that any time, but at some point you cut it off. I'm afraid I served notice that I was cutting it off, and if you want to raise a question about smart cards, Mr O'Connor, I'll recognize you.

**Mr Larry O'Connor (Durham-York):** I appreciate the opportunity to comment, and perhaps follow right in here now, because the public accounts committee did take a look at the health cards. We looked at it in depth. When we had the people from the banks come to the public accounts committee and say, "Okay, give us your best shot, what you think about health cards and the technology that's available to date," the banks even told us themselves, "We don't use the smart card ourselves." There was one bank that acknowledged that they use it for some internal security, and that was it. I mean, the banks don't even use it themselves.

The reason they're not using it is because they go through a process right now through renewal cycles, and that keeps their system with the integrity that's necessary for what they have. So I don't know, but it's not quite what I heard in the public accounts committee, and my critics were both there for that set of hearings.

Minister, if I could get you to comment first off on the OHIP and refugee decision that was made today by the federal government. I think that's an important move that's happened. I know that you were quite adamant about your stand on what the Ontario taxpayers should and shouldn't be paying, and I'd like to offer you the opportunity to comment on what had happened as far as the announcement by Ottawa today.

**The Chair:** And what effect it will have on the estimates.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think it was built into the estimates, let me say to you, and let me say how delighted I am that in fact the federal government has responded positively to our request that they cover the health costs of refugees. Ontario was one of the few provinces where

this in fact was not the case, so we requested the federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to accept responsibility for the health care costs of refugee claimants, as they did in other provinces.

As I say, I'm delighted that they have agreed to do that. We are in negotiations with them with respect to the timing and the specifics of how this will work and we anticipate that this will take some time. In the meantime, as I made clear at the time of my announcement, refugee claimants will remain covered by the province, so this is not a case of anybody losing their coverage while waiting for it.

The estimates of the medical bills of the approximately 70,000 refugee claimants who are registered, or were as of January 1994, for OHIP coverage, were estimated to be \$32.5 million annually. So we have anticipated savings of approximately that amount built into our total savings of \$48 million for eligibility.

How much of the refugee claimants savings we will make this year we're still not clear on. It depends how the negotiations go and on the timing. But I welcome the federal government's response and look forward to working constructively with them to resolve a problem that I think has been for too long shouldered by the province, where it was clearly the responsibility of the federal government.

**Mr O'Connor:** The next question I want to place is on the cancer strategy. I know the document was put out there for the people of Ontario. The strategy is evolving. I wondered if you could give an update or maybe if you have someone here that might be able to help you with that. I'd like to know when people are going to be able to see the full impact of the strategy taking place. I was pleased to be part of the tobacco end of that strategy. I understand that there's a task force that is part of this strategy as well, and I'd just like to ask when we will feel the impact of that strategy.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I guess the answer is over time. Perhaps I can ask Dr Levin to add and to bring the committee up to date on what has happened since my announcement in April.

The release of a cancer strategy for the province for the first time was extremely well received, very warmly welcomed by both the providers of service, the cancer institutions and treatment centres, as well as the support groups and the Cancer Survivors Network, who welcomed the fact that we were looking at a continuum of care.

In terms of when we see it actually in place, our expansion of radiation treatment is now unfolding and that is happening at some of the centres. I in fact added an additional \$15 million in new funding as part of my announcement in April. That will enhance our ability to do bone marrow transplants and cut down on those waiting lists, and I think we'll begin to see that quite shortly.

When it comes to looking at planning for the future, we are still reviewing where the next expansions ought to occur in terms of doing that planning. The change in the way the planning is happening is what the cancer network



and the regional networks are all about.

Dr Les Levin, who is our cancer coordinator, is here, if I could perhaps ask him to come forward and give some of the details. I know that the interest in cancer treatment is enormous and that people will be glad to hear that. If you could just introduce yourself by name.

**The Chair:** No, Minister, you already have, and I was going to thank you for having done that. So please proceed, Dr Levin.

1640

**Dr Les Levin:** As the minister mentioned, Life to Gain: A Cancer Strategy for Ontario was announced in April. The strategy looks towards a provincial framework which is brought together by a Provincial Cancer Network to be implemented regionally through a series of regional cancer networks.

The Provincial Cancer Network has met twice. There are seven new initiatives and five pre-existing initiatives which come out of the cancer strategy. The seven new initiatives have required the development of seven working groups with regional representation.

Each of the working groups has now met, had their first meeting. They have been given a time line to present implementation plans for their respective areas by November 15. We are at this point encouraged by the time line. If they're keeping to their time line, we hope to have an implementation plan submitted to the deputy for the formal implementation of the cancer strategy by January 1995. The implementation process should begin shortly thereafter.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Perhaps I can ask, Dr Levin, about the recent announcement about Princess Margaret and Toronto Hospital, their working together. Could you comment on that and how it fits in and what you think the impact of that may be?

**Dr Levin:** A steering committee has been struck to look at the coordination of oncology services between the Princess Margaret Hospital and the Toronto Hospital. I understand at this point that exercise may be extended beyond Toronto Hospital and may incorporate Mount Sinai and maybe Women's College and St Mike's. That effort, I heard, began three months ago.

The provincial cancer strategy is mentioned, in the press release announced last Friday, as being one of the driving forces behind that merger. It's not really a merger; it's just one oncology program which is headed by Dr Simon Sutcliffe, but certainly consistent with the cancer strategy. It's something which was warmly applauded by the Provincial Cancer Network, and we hope to see more of that kind of activity taking place in terms of striking partnerships across the province.

There has been an informal announcement that Essex will merge its cancer planning activities with the rest of southwestern Ontario. Until now it's been isolated from that point of view, and there are attempts to try and get the Kingston and the Ottawa regional cancer centres to merge their planning activities within one region, so there's a lot of movement taking place in terms of striking those partnerships. We'd like to think that the cancer strategy had something to do with that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Thank you very much.

**Mr O'Connor:** I guess this would be a political question, so I'll point it to the minister and perhaps he can answer it. I know that my Durham colleagues would want me to ask the question about Oshawa, and perhaps I'm out of line by asking that question.

I'm not looking for an announcement, but I know that there's a lot of pressure from Oshawa General Hospital for a cancer centre to come to that side of Toronto and get out of Toronto. I think that my Durham colleagues would probably be mad at me if I didn't place that question, so I'll place the question before you, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say that I certainly understand the pressure that there is on the eastern side of Metro for additional services. That certainly has been something that the Ontario Cancer Treatment Research Foundation has identified.

Part of the network is, how do we plan for the best location for the expansion of services? I think that we have to plan, in all of our initiatives with respect to health care planning, in a way that meets the needs of the most people as opposed to planning, in sometimes the way it was in the past, by pressure to make a decision and respond to the needs of a particular institution.

I hasten to add that nobody should read into that comment that perhaps Oshawa might not be the most appropriate place to expand. What I'm really saying is that in reviewing the capital plans of OCTRF and the needs of the eastern side of the GTA, then we will certainly be talking to all of the players and facilities in order to determine what the appropriate location might be. Will that satisfy your Durham colleagues? Is that vague enough?

**Mr O'Connor:** Thank you, Minister. That is about as vague as could be.

**The Chair:** Not prior to the next election, I can assure you of that. Mr Duignan.

**Mr Noel Duignan (Halton North):** I guess I could ask a question.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Chairman: I just wondered if, while Dr Levin is here, we could kind of break into this so that he doesn't have to come back three or four days. If we can just watch the clocks so that we all have even time, can Mr Wilson and I just have an opportunity to put a couple of questions?

**The Chair:** Mrs Sullivan, in 15 minutes you'll have an unfettered half-hour to cross-examine Dr Levin. Mr Duignan.

**Mr Duignan:** I guess I could ask some questions around local MSAs for the Halton region, but I'll avoid that question until another day.

**The Chair:** It's a matter for Georgetown, and that is in your riding, so feel free to raise it. I know I've been raising a concern about your riding.

**Mr Duignan:** That's true.

**The Chair:** Feel free to do it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Not as often as he has.

**Mr Duignan:** In particular, I just want to make

reference again to the smart card technology that was raised by Mr Wilson. I too sat on the public accounts committee and in fact paid a visit to a company that handles that type of technology, the card technology for the banks. It was also quite strange that the banks themselves, even though they were promoting the use of smart technology, weren't too inclined to be using it themselves in their employee benefits.

This is what the card looks like with a chip in it. That chip holds 20 pages of information. I guess that hinges around the whole question of privacy, the right to privacy of an individual, what type of information you could put on that chip and who would have access to that information. So that became an issue.

Again around the new card, are we expanding the information on the strip? Are we strictly sticking to the same type of information that's on the present card?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No. There will be, I think, expanded information and the capacity for expanded information. Perhaps I could ask Mary Catherine Lindberg to come forward and deal with some of those details. Thank you, Dr Levin.

**The Chair:** Welcome, Ms Lindberg. Could you just give us your title with the ministry.

**Ms Mary Catherine Lindberg:** Mary Catherine Lindberg, assistant deputy minister of health insurance and related programs.

The enhanced information on the new card will be an effective date and an expiry date. The birth date, gender, address and full name will be on there. That'll be visible on the card itself. There will also be a hologram to prevent fraudulent use or to be able to make new cards out of it. There will be a number of pieces of information on there that will give us more information, and it will be visible. Currently it's on the mag strip on the back of the card, but it's not visible. So these items will be visibly there.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** With respect to the magnetic strip, what information will be in the strip?

**Ms Lindberg:** The same information will be on the magnetic strip. Maybe I shouldn't jump in, but one of the things that makes magnetic strips look good versus smart cards in some ways is that you can start using it interactively with the state of the master computers. So you can swipe a card like you do your bank card and have interactive—it will be on, the mag strip will contain that current information on there.

We also hope to be able to tie in there family members, so that if you have a child, the child then will be either tied to the mother or the father. Your child will be tied to your card, so we'll also know who the child is. Every time the child comes in to re-register, you don't have to bring one child one month and the next child the next month. Then when the mother or the father comes in to re-register, you'll be able to register all your children at the same time. That'll make a difference. So we will be doing some family ties on the new card.

**Mr Duignan:** One of the questions again—in the public accounts committee we were looking at the whole aspect of fraud and how to tighten it up—is the inter-

action between the SIN number and the health card number. You still don't have the SIN number on the health card?

**Ms Lindberg:** No, we don't.

**Mr Duignan:** Why not?

**Ms Lindberg:** We don't collect the social insurance number. We collect birth certificate numbers and correlate birth certificate numbers with the health insurance number. Then we protect the use of the health insurance number so that it can't be used for anything other than the purposes for which it is being collected. You can only use the health insurance number for use of health care; you can't use it to identify yourself for cashing a cheque, or you should not be required to produce that card to be able to do that.

**Mr Duignan:** The question is then asked, why can't we tie the SIN number in with the health number so we can verify in some cases who you actually are? We have the SIN number on your banking information and basically everything else in this province but we can't seem to tie it in with the health card number to verify who that individual is.

**Ms Lindberg:** There's a large concern from the privacy commissioner and the protection of privacy that we have one large database, that we tie everybody together so you can tie your SIN number, your bank number and your health card number, and some concerns about the use of what you would use that kind of number for. We have been looking at maybe it would be nice to have a large set database to do that kind of thing, but there are really concerns about infringement of privacy.

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**Mr Duignan:** That actually gets back to the smart card technology, where you would end up with a lot of that information on it so you would have a powerful amount of individual information on people.

**Ms Lindberg:** On each, yes, and if you had somebody who could read that technology—

**Mr Duignan:** With all sorts of access to that information. All you need is someone with the proper scanner to read it then.

**Ms Lindberg:** Yes, and they could read any kind of history—your drug history, your lab history, your diagnostic history—if you put it on a smart card.

**Mr Duignan:** Especially if it were with the banking consortium. Not only have they got your financial information now, but they would also have your medical information.

**Ms Lindberg:** That's true.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** As we talk about the card, it's important to focus on what's the purpose of the change, and essentially there are two ways of using the card. There's the protection of the system and the fraud issue, which was the one that was very much on our minds, and then there is the enhancement of our ability to track data and to provide a better quality of service.

The initial issue that we've been attempting to address is the quality of the registration data and the security of that data and the elimination of the suspicion or illegal-



tion of an enormous fraud and, therefore, a card that was secure and a card that had enough data in order to ensure that the person using it was the person entitled to use it has been our first priority.

I think, as we get more sophisticated in needing data and understanding how we can best use data in our health care planning, we may well enhance it. But to me the first priority and certainly the thing that I understood the Legislature and my critics in all of the parties were primarily concerned about was, "Assure us there is no fraud and no illegal health cards out there." To do that, the security of the card was critical, and I'm very satisfied that we're achieving that.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I guess if we can just go back to cancer for one or two minutes—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I can ask Dr Levin to come forward, if you'd like to have some questions of him.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Yes. I'm interested, first, in knowing how the OCTRF strategy, which is available now, would be integrated into the Ontario strategy, their planning book that has recently been introduced, and where that will fit in your strategy as you move ahead.

My next question, I'd like to hear from Dr Levin how he sees the possibility of the network continuing into an agency aegis, and then I'd like to hear from the minister on the same thing.

**Dr Levin:** I really can't comment on the implementation of the OCTRF strategy because that's under their jurisdictional control. They are mandated through the Cancer Act to come forward with their own strategy and implement it according to their resource allocation. I think the timetable for implementing their strategy is really under their jurisdiction and I really am not able to comment on that. Having read their strategy, there are remarkable similarities in fact in the intent as put forward in their strategy and in Life to Gain. The same areas of concern appear in both strategies.

The Provincial Cancer Network is made up of a number of component representative parts, including the OCTRF, the OCI/PMH, the paediatric oncology group of Ontario. It recognizes community health care delivery systems. It goes beyond the OCTRF, and clearly OCTRF is a very important key player in cancer control in this province. The Provincial Cancer Network is working very closely with each of its key players to make sure that they are kept engaged in this process, and that includes OCTRF.

I don't see any real conflict between the overall strategic plans of OCTRF and I think it blends with the overall vision of the Provincial Cancer Network. The Provincial Cancer Network's vision goes beyond OCTRF, however, but recognizes OCTRF to be an important part of that overall vision.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If I can add to that, I think as part of OCTRF's strategy—it is less a strategy than a sort of capital plan and the expansions of what they see they need in the future. So the validation of that and the planning for implementation of that is something that the cancer network will be involved in as we decide how in fact to go forward in the outer years.

I think we know where some immediate pressures are, but as we look to the future, we would see the network as certainly being the way in which we had consultation and discussion from all stakeholders about OCTRF's plans, as well as, if the decision is made to expand treatment capacity at one place, then how do you build a support system and the linkages around that to make sure there is the seamless continuum of care that people need in that. Before you put Dr Levin on the spot, Mrs Sullivan, with respect to an agency, let me try and then he can answer after me. How's that?

**Mrs Sullivan:** I deliberately did it the other way.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I know you did, and I deliberately avoided allowing Dr Levin to do that. I think that what we are putting in place as a network is in effect what is required to do appropriate planning to make it a continuation and to involve as many people as possible.

I think we have frankly too much work to do and too much need to involve the entire health system in the planning that we do to establish another major agency just looking at cancer, because it's very hard to know, when you're planning at the district health council level, where planning for cancer support systems ends and planning for long-term care and those kinds of supports begins. We have to integrate the provision of community-based services that meet the needs of the entire population.

**Dr Levin:** Do you want me to carry on?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Be my guest.

**Dr Levin:** Just one other thing about the OCTRF strategic plan before I forget it: I really see the Provincial Cancer Network as providing the OCTRF with an important springboard to expedite the implementation of their strategic plan. As used appropriately, we always intended the PCN to capitalize the activities and to enhance the activities of all of its constituent members, and I think there are wonderful opportunities for that to happen.

The cancer agency, as the Provincial Cancer Network, will re-evaluate its own status in a process probably beginning by the end of the year to find out exactly what its future is and what the umbrella organization for this province might look like. It might be the Provincial Cancer Network, it might be a sibling of the Provincial Cancer Network or it might be something totally different.

The major objective of the Provincial Cancer Network is to come forward with a plan to implement the cancer strategy—that's the immediate objective—and to bring key players around the table so we can have people talking to each other about the very urgent needs in cancer care delivery in the province. It has a fairly short-to medium-term objective. What evolves from it is one of the exciting parts of the Provincial Cancer Network, because at this point we don't really know.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I suppose that one of my concerns, and I have expressed this from the very beginning, from the very day of the announcement, is that the network itself is time-lined and is temporary. I understand that it will be coming forward with recommendations with respect to the future, but it seems to me that the problem, for many, many years, in ensuring that there is an appropriate



cancer control strategy is that there has not been a continuing body responsible for long-term planning, and therefore we have continuing cycles of crisis that are highly problematic. I saw once again the framework for another cycle of crisis and I think that's a problem and I think it should be looked at very seriously. I hope that the network will.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That's precisely its objective.

**Mrs Sullivan:** That's all I have on cancer.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, there was some discussion earlier about human resource planning and the committee PCCCAR. Somebody's got to know the anagram for PCCCAR.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Jodey does. However, Bob McMurry, the dean of the academic health science centre, happens to be on his way to the building and would be available to answer some of those questions within the next ten or 15 minutes, if that would be helpful to the committee members. I think they would find it interesting. He can tell you what PCCCAR stands for.

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**Mrs Sullivan:** The next area that I wanted to move into is the obligations of the ministry under pay equity programs. As we look at the latest pay equity legislation etc and I leaf through the estimates, I see pay equity obligations or allocations—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Can you direct me to the page in the estimates?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Yes. There are a whole bunch of them: page 182, long-term care facilities, \$8,742,500; public health, page 155, \$1,015,200; community-based care, page 191, \$15,922,400; page 83, hospitals, \$29,891,900; and community mental health, \$90,500.

My sense is that in fact what I have found here is not all of the obligations the ministry will face or all of the demand the ministry will face with respect to that pay equity legislation, depending on the proportional value results or comparative results, that in fact the demand is far more for pay equity adjustments than have been allocated.

I would be interested in knowing, perhaps not today but I would like to see some figures, first of all, on what the demands are that are coming from the broader public sector. Certainly in some cases, I understand that the demands are as high for change as \$9 an hour, and if those demands, as I anticipate, substantially exceed the supply allocation, then how is the ministry going to deal with this issue?

We're talking about transfer agencies who are dependent on the Ministry of Health for funding: long-term care facilities, public health bodies, community-based care agencies, hospitals and so on. Many of the hospitals clearly have set aside reserves, certainly for the first two or three years of pay equity, but the new pay equity law may make a significant and different impact on what their calculations were.

I think that it would be useful—not today, because I know that I'm coming at you out of the blue on this—for

us all to have a real understanding of what the ministry obligations are in this area, what the demand is and what the supply limits are.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'll ask the deputy to give a response.

**Mrs Mottershead:** We would be pleased to provide that information. However, I think I should flag that some of this information is retrospective rather than prospective, because when we do our pay equity survey, we actually have to be satisfied that there isn't just a pay equity plan but there in fact is a process of paying out to those individuals the pay equity portion that's entitled to them.

As you're well aware, in the legislation it requires that 1% be set aside for each employee, particularly related to job-to-job, and we find that most hospitals have been accruing the 1%, and in fact over the last few years, the government has provided at least a ratio of 75% to 80% against that 1% requirement. So there has been a tremendous amount, I would suggest, of relief, particularly to hospitals for the job-to-job.

There are three other elements that the government has entertained in legislation in addition to job-to-job, and that is proxy, proportional, and in fact one element which the government decided to contemplate late last year was related to down payment for those organizations that had difficulty coming up with their plans around proxy and proportional; therefore, not to put anyone at disadvantage in terms of the female population in certain establishments, the government decided to introduce a down payment program.

I can certainly provide that information and it may not be possible to do that for tomorrow because it requires a little bit of work, but certainly before the end of the session on estimates.

**Mrs Sullivan:** It seems to me that is going to emerge as a larger and larger issue in this field and we should know what's happening.

I want to go back to the emergency on-call, just for a very brief second. During the discussion with Mr Wilson, the minister indicated that in fact what was happening now was that the terms of reference for a meeting between the ministry, the Ontario Hospital Association and the OMA were being discussed. The second impression I had as the discussion was going on was that in fact the ministry contemplates the necessity for separate negotiations for each situation rather than one broad-band policy.

Certainly there was a reference made to some previous negotiations that you might not want copied—I assume that Mount Forest would be a perfect example of that—but am I correct in assuming that there will be one APP or other approach or that there might be individual approaches for each scenario, by example, that Red Lake would have to be considered in isolation from the situation in Clinton or in Hanover or wherever?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me be clear about what I was saying, and I'll ask the deputy and she can feel free if I've misinterpreted, but certainly my hope had always been that we would have a provincial framework, and

that was what the committee we established last November between the Ontario Hospital Association, the OMA and ourselves was designed to do, a provincial framework that would enable us to deal with small hospitals and with the conversion of funds from the \$3.85-billion fee-for-service pool into alternative payments.

What I intended to indicate in my earlier response was that our inability at this point to reach that overall framework had not, nor ought it, to inhibit ongoing discussions in particular instances where there was a particular problem. Obviously, if we could arrive at a solution in any of those cases, we would not hold that up until we had a provincial framework.

I think it would be preferable and I think it would be easier for the hospitals and for the physicians to have a provincial framework within which we can then discuss variations in particular circumstances, but I was certainly not prepared to say to anybody, "Look, you have a problem, but you can't do anything about it because we don't have a provincial framework yet." I see both happening.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Then I'll go back to a similar but a different question to the one Mr Wilson asked. Have you put a draft provincial framework on the table?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, we haven't, and that was where we were hoping to go with the committee that began its work last November. That, as I say, fell apart in February, and we're now discussing with the OMA coming back and its signal that it was going to put some preconditions to its return, which concerns us, because I think everybody has to come to the table and be prepared to discuss the issue fairly openly. That was the kind of discussion my deputy referred to in her response to the question.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I wonder if I could add to that so there's a bit more context around the early discussions. They revolved around trying to pin down a lot of the data. As you're aware, there is a whole range of activity that also happens in a hospital setting that isn't really related to emergency room coverage.

Because we're into a conversion, part of the discussions had to deal with discussions from the fee-for-service pool, trying to segregate those situations where a physician actually sees a patient, non-emergent, from the real emergency activity in a particular hospital. In order to come to a resolution around what is the appropriate conversion number for moving from fee-for-service into alternative payments, those issues have to be dealt with.

There are many other related issues to this. There are issues of professional fees, hospital technical fees, and it's trying to segregate all of those and reach a decision that all parties are comfortable with that is taking some time and I suspect will continue to take a bit more time.

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**Mrs Sullivan:** I guess the minister should hear this. Members of the executive of both the Ontario Hospital Association and the Ontario Medical Association have expressed considerable frustration to me in the past three or four days with respect to the fact that a meeting has not been called. The minister tells us today that the terms

of reference for a meeting are still being discussed. Why don't you just call a meeting yourself?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** A letter had gone to them from the deputy inviting them to a meeting. With a date?

**Mrs Mottershead:** There has been no date established. We wanted to get the names first of the people, because quite frankly, to indicate how seriously the minister and the government are taking this, I actually nominated our two participants on this review committee or special committee or whatever we might call it, and those are the two assistant deputy ministers who have some responsibility for health insurance and physicians' services. That's Ms Jodey Porter and Ms Mary Catherine Lindberg. So I've indicated that at the highest level.

What has happened in previous discussions is that both organizations have delegated to different levels and those people don't necessary have perhaps the clout to actually discuss policy. I wanted to indicate right up front that it's a very serious issue, that we want to tackle it at the highest level. We want nominations from both organizations of people who will be able to actually have a discussion and a decision that will stick with their parent organizations. As soon as we get the names, the meeting will be called.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Dean McMurtry has come, and if we wanted to move into a discussion of distribution and recruitment of physicians in response to an earlier question, I'd be happy to do that for as long as it would have use to the committee.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Wayne Lessard):** It's Ms Sullivan's time right now. If that's the way she would like it to be used—

**Mrs Sullivan:** I don't mind doing that, as long as I keep my time and as long as my time is added on.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think it would be very helpful for the committee. I'm in your hands as to how the time is organized. If it can be some of our time, I don't think people would mind.

**The Acting Chair:** It's up to the rest of the committee members whether we extend the time.

**Mr O'Connor:** We're in Barbara Sullivan's time right now.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I've got 15 minutes left, right?

**The Acting Chair:** Just about.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Could we interrupt that?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Why don't we interrupt it, and then we'll add my 15 minutes on later. Then the government will follow, right?

**Mr O'Connor:** Pick up the seven minutes that I lost at the beginning of your questioning, I suppose, if you want.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I'd just like to say I'd prefer not to do it that way. I have a couple of questions I'd like to ask the minister, and I'm not sure if—

**The Acting Chair:** If we can't do it on consent, I don't think we're going to be able to do it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Well, I think that we have an opportunity, and Dean McMurtry happens to be here from



London. It would be a shame, the question having been raised, not to take advantage of that.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Then I will formulate a question for Dean McMurtry, if he could come forward.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Good sport, Barbara.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Dean McMurtry from the University of Western Ontario and Jodey Porter, our assistant deputy minister, who have both been dealing with this issue.

**Mrs Sullivan:** We had earlier in the course of this estimates process discussed, in an introductory way, the entire question of physician planning, resource planning and issues associated with retention and other issues, particularly in remote and rural regions. We know that you've been working along with the other deans on these issues, and we'd like to hear what you're doing.

**Dr Robert McMurtry:** Are you interested in particular in the committee called the Provincial Coordinating Committee on Community and Academic Health Science Centre Relations?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That's the one I couldn't remember what it was.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Now that we've got you here, there are two issues: One of them is the work of that activity and how it feeds into the government process. The second is how decisions are being shaped with respect to admissions to medical schools over the longer term, how the numbers are developed and how decisions are made, for instance, that existing GPs who are already in practice can't go back for specialty education to enter pathology or whatever. Now all the questions are coming to me.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Can you answer this in five minutes or less?

**Dr McMurtry:** The first committee is the Provincial Coordinating Committee on Community and Academic Health Science Centre Relations. PCCCAR, for short, is much easier. It is under the chairmanship of Dr John Evans. It has representation from experts in the health care field with varying backgrounds, but it's still a relatively small committee of approximately four or five of those, and by the public by virtue of the district health council group, the Association of District Health Councils of Ontario.

That is the senior committee and it has three subcommittees, with a fourth one contemplated. The three subcommittees are, one, the subcommittee on the role and future of academic health science centres; second, a subcommittee on post-graduate education; and third, a subcommittee on underservicing. The fourth or contemplated committee is one in relationship to emergency medicine or emergency services coverage.

This subcommittee is chaired by Dr John Evans, as I mentioned, and reports to the minister through the deputy. The committee has a life that is to run to approximately December 1, 1994. The procedure is that when the committee makes recommendations, then decisions at that committee go to the minister via the deputy minister for acceptance or otherwise.

In fact there have been some positive developments in that regard. For example, we've had some good success in management of the post-graduate complement of

doctors—in other words, people who are in their residency—and there has been significant progress made in reconfiguration. The subcommittee on post-graduate education recommended it under the chairmanship of Nick Busing of Ottawa. That came forward to the full committee and was approved, and then that was in turn approved by the ministry. So that portion of it is a success story.

We continue to have troubles, however, because of the budgetary restraints, and in particular on the clinical education budget. We are left with a choice of taking physicians who are graduating from medical schools and saying they can't have employment and/or limiting re-entry. Neither proposition is attractive. We see that in our post-graduate training there is a readiness by all the schools, I think it's fair to say, to look at very different models, and there is an integration of the subcommittees in this regard.

In summation, the subcommittee on the role and future of academic health science centres is increasingly stating that we should not be so much centres as networks and our number one mission is to be accountable and to network with our communities. It's a very important shift in paradigm and I won't elaborate on it now, but that very clearly in our process is the message that is forthcoming. That relates to human resource planning, for medical folk in particular.

In terms of the post-graduate committee, how do we make decisions about admitting doctors to post-graduate training etc? The answer is that historically we have allowed them to have choice, and what we are increasingly shifting towards is saying we won't do it in terms of supply-side but rather in terms of needs-based. We want to make shifts so that our post-graduate folks are heading towards areas of need.

We are constrained by two things. One is the budget for the clinical education budget. We are down quite a number of positions, so re-entry is currently being lost as an option. The other is that we have to make changes ourselves, because quite often, for example, if you wish radiation oncologists, it's something of what we would call a 12-year solution. From the time you make a decision it's what you want, it could take a lot of years before the person is actually in a practice site.

The option we want to consider much more is taking family physicians and giving them special training in a particular area, be it psychogeriatrics or inner-city medicine or radiation oncology, and saying, "Why don't you pick up on perhaps 80% of what a specialist might do in that year, and we will make sure we can provide you with the skills?" There is a readiness at the medical schools to do that. Like all things in life, it's not perfectly straightforward. There are issues of accreditation and acceptance by various licensing bodies, but we see it as being achievable.

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If given the opportunity, we see that there are some very exciting ways in which we can deal with human resource shortfalls in ways that we haven't done in the past. What we're dealing with, of course, is the whole issue of health reform, and that health stratagem is the



affordability crisis that confronts us all. So our options are constrained.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'm interested in and pleased with the emphasis on a needs-based planning approach. You have mentioned a couple of constraints, one of them being the clinical education budget. Are there constraints as well in the availability of predictive data with respect to disease incidence or demographic profiles or other epidemiological data that would be required to identify specific long-term shortages in specialties or in subspecialties, and the greying of specialties such as surgery and pathology?

**Dr McMurtry:** Our information is inadequate. The fundamental overview is that we have a surfeit of data but a shortage of intelligence or good information, I hope not of human intelligence, but we have a shortage of good-quality information. We need to get better at it, to be frank. I'm hopeful that something will be forthcoming in regard to health intelligence units in each of the regions, where we get much better at doing these predictions and working with the ministry and others to be better at predicting. Your criticism is well founded. Our information isn't as good as it could be.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I really think it would be too long a discussion to talk about the academic health science centres. What would be, however, the role of the fourth group that would be set up with respect to emergency services? Would you basically be doing an analysis of all emergency services, including hospital-based, ambulance-based, or what in fact is the task of that new subcommittee that's proposed?

**Dr McMurtry:** At the moment this is a proposed subcommittee, so my answer will be somewhat speculative in terms of how I see that it should be dealt with. An emergency, for the sake of discussion, is defined as a condition or problem that, if not intervened with within 24 hours, will result in a predictable compromise of outcome. If you don't do it within a day you're going to have a problem, to put it bluntly.

Obviously, emergencies range from the minute-to-minute ones down to those that can wait towards 24 hours. When you are contemplating intervention at that level, then you must deal with it all the way from the moment of onset of illness or injury until definitive treatment. That picks up on a lot of pre-hospital issues such as ambulances and retrieval, advanced life support in the field, very crucial elements of communications, the issue of how hospitals network with one another. For example, someone may go to a smaller hospital and require backup from a larger facility. So the elements of emergency embrace a lot of issues within the first 24 hours.

I can recall, when I was involved in trauma care, that we would identify as many as 22 professionals whose expertise needed to be brought to bear in order to deal with somebody who is seriously injured, for example. That would all be required within the first 24 hours. Doctors certainly are a very important part of the piece, but so too are many others. It's a complex issue.

What we want to do, when we are looking at this, is to look at the network through the province and see to it that we have sufficient support, that when people are

suddenly ill or injured, they can get expert advice quickly through communications technology and be transported quickly to where definitive care can occur. That's as quick an overview as I can give it.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think it's an interesting fit with this committee because it certainly addresses a multidisciplinary and multisite approach. One of the things, I suppose, that's a little bit of a concern about the post-grad element of your committee is that it doesn't link into other broader human resources planning. We've got the docs isolated over here and then the nurses and nurse practitioners are here and somebody else is over there, and ne'er the twain seem to meet in terms of what in fact our needs are in terms of total human resources over a longer period of time and how that training would be delivered.

**Dr McMurtry:** We need much better linkage. The interesting thing is that because of the pressures that are being brought to bear, all over the piece there are hospitals and other organizations that are making judgements and doing what are called provider substitutions; in other words, changing the people who are doing various tasks in order to make it work.

I think one of the interesting things we might do is to do an inventory of that, because I don't know of a major teaching hospital that at some level isn't involved with provider substitution. That's the world from which I come. I suspect if you go to some of the smaller centres, you'll find exactly the same kind of thing going on.

So I think all over the piece on a local basis you're seeing provider substitution. Your point was, shouldn't the various groups be talking to each other? The answer is yes. I think that many of us would invite the challenge to put forward new models to do exactly that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was going to suggest that perhaps Jodey could respond to that.

**The Chair:** I don't care which one of you goes. It's helpful if you go through the Chair, and then I can decide which of the two of you can go. Mrs Sullivan, we're coming to the end of your cycle, and I have to come to Mr Wilson, but if a short answer is anticipated.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I have just time to ask one more question.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was going to suggest that perhaps Ms Porter might want to expand on that, because the whole human resource planning, not just for physicians, is part of what she has been involved in. She could give a quick response on that.

**The Chair:** Ms Sullivan, would you like that expanded?

**Mrs Sullivan:** No, thank you. I've got three more minutes, right?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I want to move to a completely different section of the estimates. I'd like to have a full briefing note written, not today, with respect to compensation for midwives at the various levels, basically to respond with accuracy to some of the questions that are coming forward.

I would also like to know what the status of the mandatory programs review for local health agencies is.

I also saw in the estimates, under the drug benefits program, a substantial increase in the budget for special drugs, from \$15 million to \$45 million. Am I reading this correctly? I think I am; yes, I am. I'd be interested in knowing what new drugs will be covered or for what particular illnesses.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We're looking at volume. This is a demand-driven program.

**The Chair:** Minister, at best we'll get all of Mrs Sullivan's concerns on the record, and then you could respond in a more fulsome way tomorrow.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I wouldn't even mind having, once again, a briefing note approach. I would also be very interested in seeing any efforts in a written form that the ministry has made with respect to developing an appropriate pharmaco-economic model.

**The Chair:** A brief response, and if not, I'd like to move on.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'm out of time now.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm certainly happy to respond on the special drugs. Essentially, it's a demand-driven program run through the hospitals whereby we meet the budgets. We plug in an amount in our estimates and we hope that by better management we may manage to contain the costs, but inevitably it has been over and above that. It does not reflect increases or changes in the program.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Perhaps Ms Porter would like to finish the thought she didn't quite get to put on the record.

**Ms Jodey Porter:** In terms of more comprehensive health human resource planning, we have had a strong focus on the medical establishment. I think it has been of note in Ontario that we are still turning out more paediatricians than geriatricians, despite the aging population. We do, as Dr McMurtry has pointed out, have an issue with radiation oncology. Those are 12-year solutions, so we need to get in a real and anticipatory way. We've done a lot of collaborative work with the medical schools in terms of medical service planning for the future.

1730

We have also, and even under the aegis of PCCCAR, Dr Evans's committee, ensured that in fact the majority of representation is not physician representation. Dentistry, nursing, consumers are the majority on that committee. Although we have focused very heavily on the medical establishment, we have at the same time not only been working with midwifery and some of the other provider groups on a one-to-one basis, but also opened up large discussions with various stakeholders from the nursing profession, from the college, from the union, from the academic side.

We've had a series of very productive round tables with nursing. They've come up with an eight-point plan to the ministry. We believe we can in fact implement and work with them to implement all eight points. So we're not solely on the medical frontier. We are opening up other frontiers. I think the perfect solution, the compre-

hensive health human resource plan is the ideal for the future. No province has achieved it at this stage.

Our view is that through organizations or committees or structures like PCCCAR, getting all the players and all the leaders and the recommendations into one room is a very good, collaborative first step. So that's the beginning for us and we recognize we have a long way to go.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate those comments, Ms Porter. It does tie into something that Dr Evans referred to.

Dr Evans, you talked about post-graduate complement or the residency reconfiguration that you've done but you didn't really have time to expand. What exactly did the committee recommend and what did the government accept in that area? You talked about it as an exciting area where you've made progress.

**Dr McMurtry:** Thank you for the promotion. I think you called me Dr Evans.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Sorry, Dr McMurtry.

**Dr McMurtry:** No apology is required. I'm thrilled. Your question is what actual through-puts have we had in terms of changes?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Yes.

**Dr McMurtry:** What we've been able to accomplish is, first, a method by which we can have a clear identification of all the post-graduate activity that has been going on in the province. We've set up what is called a pool proposal or model by which we can characterize a whole manner and variety of post-graduate trainees, fellows, Canadian graduates, international medical graduates etc, so that for the first time we have a strong hold on the issue of exactly how many players we have, how many are being trained and what their backgrounds are and where they're heading to. So the acceptance of the pool proposal was very important.

The second accomplishment from the post-graduate side was that there was a redistribution of residents among the schools to achieve more regional equity, which hadn't existed before.

A third achievement which is under way, which has some significance, is, the deans of the medical schools, a fractious group, to be sure, have come together in an agreement to realign further the post-graduate programs and to create increased flexibility in the post-graduate slots to increase our ability, to increase our flexibility, in terms of responding to needs and to give residents choices as to where they train, and thus reinforce excellence. This agreement is just in the past week and represents quite a departure from the way it has gone historically. All the schools have worked together on that outcome.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate your comments because, as I said earlier, we had a meeting a few weeks back with Ms Porter regarding the initiative put forward by Dr Peter Wells of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital, and I expect the answer is that specific proposal hasn't been reviewed yet by your committee. But perhaps Ms Porter would like to comment on that.

**Ms Porter:** Actually, we have invited Dr Wells and he has confirmed his attendance at the next PCCCAR



meeting, which I believe is June 22. He'll be making his presentation, which he made with us a number of weeks ago, to that group. That will be part of the ministry's priorities in terms of rural medical practice, to negotiate with the deans in terms of available training spots for the next academic year.

Clearly, rural family practice and rural emergency practice are critical issues for us today. We see the training establishment and the kinds of proposals that are brought forward to us by practising physicians and teaching physicians like Dr Wells in smaller communities as extremely vital in reaching the longer-term, and even the shorter-term, solutions.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** It sounds from Dr McMurtry's comments as if there might be a good fit there with what Dr Wells has come up with, independent of the work of the committee.

I do have a question, though. As you said, you're moving away from supply-side to needs-based. I'm just wondering, in rather layman's terms, how you're going about, in this day and age, identifying shortages of physicians by whatever classes in the province, in the rural areas. Are we still using doc-pop ratios? Can you just explain on that how you're identifying need and, secondly, need with respect to specifically the shortages we have in certain specialties?

It's a very controversial thing out there when you're talking to individual physicians. For instance, last night in Owen Sound they were indicating that they're always shortchanged because the ministry never identifies need properly in their area. Certainly physicians in my area of the province feel the same way. They feel that the statistical approach taken so far is unfair, inaccurate, whatever language they use to describe it. Is that changing?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Wilson, you can't hold Dean McMurtry responsible for the deficiencies of the ministry.

**Ms Porter:** Shall I speak to deficiencies?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Well, whoever would like to speak to that. I seem to be identifying need. There are some new frontiers being broken on this.

**Ms Porter:** For years what has been used in Canada and what we're still using as base data in Ontario is the doc-pop ratio. That doesn't work. I think it's a tool, it's one tool, it isn't the complete solution.

What we're working on now, again through one of the subcommittees of PCCCAR, chaired by Dr Paul Humphries from Thunder Bay, is in fact a needs-based assessment tool that could be used by communities as well as the ministry, not only to look at physician requirements, because frequently, although the most chronic need or the acute need—no pun intended—is identified as a physician issue, frequently it's a shortage or a way of using other providers in the system, particularly nursing, for example.

That piece of work, which has been a tough piece of work for that committee, and it's a multi-stakeholder committee—people from smaller communities in Ontario, the OHA, the associations of interns and residents, the medical schools, a number of provider groups—has been ongoing. They are going to be working through the

summer and we're going to have that methodology, that tool from them in September.

At the same time we've been working with the chairs of family practice from across Ontario to look at how family practice is and isn't working in smaller-town Ontario. We've had some very, very interesting results which we'd be happy to share with you, but that's research work and it's not high-flown research. It's very practical about how medical service is and isn't working. I think it's very important to the next steps we take in terms of putting a better planning system in place in the province.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Dr McMurtry, did you want to respond to that?

**Dr McMurtry:** There are a couple of things I was going to say. One is going back to an earlier question, and that is that under the Royal College regulations it's acceptable for trainees to have six months in a community setting in their post-graduate program, which is something we could take advantage of. I mention that because we do have that accreditation issue.

Another difficulty we have with doing some of the things we'd like to do is that from a policy standpoint we want to do the re-entries in all these new models, but from the fiscal side we're short of positions, and it's getting worse for 1995-96 from all information that we're getting.

In other words, if there is a flexibility situation that we're going to have to deal with, so that from a policy standpoint, as I see it and speaking as a dean, we agree and we see perfectly eye to eye with the direction we want to head, but from a fiscal standpoint we're being very compressed on positions and faced with some unattractive choices.

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The next point I was going to make is that a man at the University of York in England defined "need" as the capacity to benefit per unit cost. It's where we should begin. When we see people who have needs, there may be any number of mix of providers who might make a difference. The place to start is, "What's the need and what is the best match of providers that can make a difference?" as opposed to assuming it needs to be a particular provider group or groups.

Need definition is very elusive, and doc-pop ratios for sure don't work. For example, internationally the ratio of docs to nurses ranges from six to one nurses to physicians in England, to four to one in Canada and one to one in Spain. That's without even talking about any other providers. There's a real mix of what each is doing from country to country. So defining "need" is certainly challenging.

The last comment I'd make is that academic health science centres should be networks, so they should work with the people in their community to be sure that we're helping them with their human resource planning. When we say "academic health centres" we mean all the disciplines, not just the medical. We should have an active interface to try to help.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Thank you very much. I think Mr



Arnott has a constituency question he wants to ask.

**Mr Arnott:** I have a question to the minister.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was happy to see Dr McMurtry and thank him most sincerely for having given us the time and coming in specially. Thank you very much indeed.

**The Chair:** Just think: After the next election you're going to make a fabulous Chairman.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think I make a fabulous Health minister and I plan to continue.

**The Chair:** Let's both stay focused then.

It was a hell of a presentation out there. Thank you, Minister. I don't know why you type up these lists with everybody's name and title for us. It's just wonderful.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't.

**The Chair:** Please, don't be deterred by all this, Mr Arnott. Proceed. I'm sure the minister was about to listen to your question.

**Mr Arnott:** I'll put my question to the Chairman or the minister, whoever wants to answer it, but it is a serious question, to get back to a serious issue. I received a telephone call from constituents back in November of last year, Gerald and Edith Henry from Clifford. Gerald has arthritis. He's been on medication called Indocid for some time. It was one of the drugs that I believe was delisted some time ago by the government as no longer eligible under the Ontario drug benefit program.

Now, of course, I understand there's a mechanism whereby if an individual wishes to continue receiving the drug that they had been receiving previously and if they have the doctor's letter indicating that the specific drug has to be the one that's supplied for their condition, that a generic substitute is not applicable, the ministry will review that and determine whether or not it will cover it under the Ontario drug benefit program.

We tried to follow that process. I had Mr and Mrs Henry write me a letter, again back in November. I brought this to the attention of Mr Y.S. Drazin, who's the director of the drug programs branch. We had documentation from the family doctor as well indicating that the individual needed this Indocid drug. I guess we sent the letter in December. We received a response back from Theresa Firestone, who was the director of the drug programs branch right before Christmas, indicating that the ministry would not pay for Indocid.

Mr Henry was quite disappointed by this decision and asked me to bring it to your attention as minister, which I did, writing you—I guess the date here is in February—again with a handwritten letter from their family physician—I'll give you a copy of it; I'll pass it to you, Minister—again requesting that this drug be allowed and that it be paid for under the Ontario drug benefit program.

It was February that this letter was sent to you. I wrote you again in March and I wrote you again in April and I've not received a reply. I'm just asking you for your personal undertaking to look into this matter on behalf of my constituent and see if there isn't complete documentation there which would allow for him to receive this

drug. I believe it should be retroactive too as well, given the history of it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I certainly apologize for not responding. It's not the minister who decides what drug would be dispensed. It is the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee that makes the recommendations from a therapeutic as well as a cost-effective point of view. In the case of an application for a special drug, again, that would be reviewed objectively as to whether in fact the request was justified.

I could ask Mary Catherine Lindberg to come and talk to the process, but I feel very uncomfortable talking about an individual case in this kind of forum, though I would certainly give you my undertaking to examine the correspondence.

**Mr Arnott:** That's all I request.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** But I think it probably would be helpful if Ms Lindberg could describe the steps and the process so that people are all familiar with what happens.

**The Chair:** It may be, but I'd have to ask Mr Arnott if he wishes to use the balance of his colleagues' time with an explanation of the process or if he had other questions.

**Mr Arnott:** I think I gave a summary of what the process was, as far as I understand it. If I'm mistaken, perhaps you could briefly say exactly where I was mistaken. But I understand there is—

**Ms Lindberg:** I'll look into it, but the process is, if it's Indocid, Indocid is currently listed but it has a generic substitute. All the doctor needs to do to get the brand name of a generic is write what we call a PC-34, which is a handwritten prescription by himself, signed by the doctor, and the pharmacist then remits it and gets Indocid and gets paid for the price of Indocid, not paid for the generic price.

**Mr Arnott:** Yes, we've done that—

**Ms Lindberg:** If it was extended-release Indocid, which is the one we delisted, then the contention is that it would be just as valuable for the person to take the Indocid and not the Indocid long-acting because of the kinds of reactions and side-effects you get from an SR.

So with Indocid SR, which we delisted, you probably would not get it filled by special authorization, because the DQTC felt very strongly that it should not be a benefit, and there were health reasons for it not being a benefit. If the patient needed it, he'd be better to take it as a regular dose on a regular dosage schedule, and that drug currently, the regular drug Indocid, is covered.

We'll look into it, but I think if it's the SR, we have not been given exemptions on that, mainly because the DQTC, which makes all the decisions on special applications, feels strongly that for better health effects, you should take it in a non-sustained-release form.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** In other words, the drug is available, but you would have to take it a number of times a day, as opposed to the request which was that it be in the slow-release form, which would enable the patient to only take it twice a day. But they can get this drug if it's one that their doctor feels they need to have. I will certainly look into the correspondence, because it's unacceptable

that you should not have had an answer, and I apologize.

**Mr Arnott:** I appreciate that, Minister. Thank you.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I want to go to vote item 1502-6, the loans-based financing, Jobs Ontario Capital. I have a personal interest in this with the county of Simcoe and hospital capital projects that have been promised over the years. I think every year in Health estimates I ask people very similar questions, and I'm going to ask you—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Your other colleague from Simcoe has the Royal Victoria well in hand after many years of promises.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** That's very interesting that the Royal Victoria is well in hand, but I'm worried about the other three hospitals as well.

I saw in Mr Laughren's budget only a mention of the Royal Victoria, at \$98 million, and I'm a little concerned that one hospital's going without the others. I would ask you to bring us up to date on all four hospitals, that is, Soldier's Memorial in Orillia, Royal Victoria in Barrie, General and Marine Hospital in Collingwood and Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston. They were part of a package and very concerned when they saw the budget come out that only one hospital was mentioned.

Secondly, I would just mention that obviously with the new off-book, loans-based financing, it's very difficult to find out from the Ministry of Health estimates exactly what capital projects the ministry is intending to proceed with this year. So specifically with the capital allocation for Simcoe county, can you bring us up to date on the four hospitals, please?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Okay, let me just make the point that references in the budget were to major capital expenditures, and the absence of the mention of any others ought not to be taken as an indication that they are not under active consideration.

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With respect to the Simcoe, as I understand it, in September 1992 the ministry reconfirmed a commitment for capital projects in Simcoe county, and the DHC has been working in order to make sure that the functional programs that the hospital submitted are in line with the recommendations and the approach that the DHC is taking on a district-wide planning approach. Perhaps the deputy wants to add to that.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I was going to suggest that we have the assistant deputy minister for the institutional group here, Mr Mark Rochon, who may have more up-to-date information on those projects.

**The Chair:** Could you come to the microphone, please? I believe you've already been suitably introduced. If you could be seated and respond.

**Mr Mark Rochon:** Thank you. What I could do is get you some specific information on the status of those projects for tomorrow afternoon.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** That would be most helpful because, obviously the communities don't understand functional planning and they don't understand a lot of the hoops that they seem to have to go through to get these projects up

and going, so to shed any light on it would be most helpful at this point.

Particularly, Minister—and I think it's a question for you, given that you're heading into the last year of your mandate—are you hoping to make these capital announcements, actually get things moving, building, prior to leaving office next year?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think the timing depends, quite frankly, on the planning. Let me put this in the way in which in fact it is unfolding: When we took office, there was a wide range of commitments that had been made for capital projects. There had been no dollars allocated or identified in order to live up to those commitments, so one of the early things we did was undertake a review of many of those.

The other thing that has happened is that the whole approach to health care and to capital projects and institutions is changing almost monthly as the planning occurs and we move away from institutions to community-based, to ambulatory, to out-patient service increases as a way of providing a better quality of service.

Many of the projects that appeared advisable even five years ago are no longer consistent with the plans that the district health councils are preparing or with the analysis that's being done of the needs of various communities. So it is critical that no capital planning or commitments be made until there is in fact a plan for the rationalization of services within a particular region.

I know, having met recently with the Simcoe district health council, that it's one of the most active district health councils, with a wide range of volunteers looking at all aspects of health planning, and the movement ahead of Royal Vic is something that is consistent with its role as a regional hospital to serve that area.

The functions of the other hospitals need to be conclusively determined before commitments can be made for investments in those facilities, and it's the status of those discussions that I think the assistant deputy minister can bring back to the committee tomorrow.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I appreciate that. I would ask Mr Rochon, with respect to reading the estimates this year, there's \$150 million that's going off-book to the Ontario Financing Authority, and I'm just wondering what that is based on. Does the ministry have a series of projects that they expect will proceed to construction this year? I'm wondering if that list is available. What is the \$150 million based on? What is actually going to get built this year and what is deferred until other years?

I'm also interested in the relationship between the OFA and the ministry, and exactly how this works. I imagine the ministry gives approval. Do the hospitals themselves actually apply to borrow the money from the OFA, or how exactly does that work?

**Mr Rochon:** Perhaps the details of the relationship of the OFA can be dealt with by the deputy or someone else. But in terms of the specifics, the \$150 million deals with projects that exceed \$1 million, so anything less than \$1 million is dealt with on a grants base as opposed to a loans-based approach. We have projected out beyond 1994-95 for the allocation of capital dollars through the



loans-based program and we can provide the estimates that we have for specific projects under way in 1994-95.

It's quite an extensive list. Some of the issues relate to health and safety concerns and are less than \$1 million on the grant side. Others are much more significant including, for example, the project on University Avenue with the Princess Margaret Hospital, which is a significant share of the expenditure in this coming year. If you'd like, we can provide some detail—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** To make your life easier, I'm really interested in the projects over \$1 million that will be funded through the OFA. Does the deputy want to comment on the mechanism? I was at a hospital board in eastern Ontario two weeks ago and, to use the term, for lack of a better one, ordinary board members don't understand that the money is essentially being borrowed now from a capital corp. Perhaps you'd like to just explain what the mechanism is there.

**Mrs Mottershead:** The Ontario Financing Authority is the borrowing arm for capital projects in this province, based on a plan that's submitted first by the hospital on how much money it will require in terms of construction. That in turn gets aggregated by the ministry and gets forwarded to the financing authority for all projects under construction so that they are aware how much money is required and how much they need to borrow, not just for the Ministry of Health but for the broader public sector organizations.

In turn there is an agreement that is developed that is the loan agreement between the financing corporation and the hospital which actually lays out the amounts to be borrowed as well as the amounts payable. The Ministry of Health does provide for an operating subsidy to the hospitals so they in fact can repay the debenture that they've agreed to.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** It's that latter point that's sticky with administrators, and this is not only with hospitals but on the municipal side of that too. Yes, there's an agreement, yes, it's a 20-year amortization period, yes, there are semiannual payments through the operating budget from the ministry to the hospitals, but what if some government 10 years down the road says, "We're not going to pay these grants any more"?

What assurance do hospitals have in this case—and it also applies to municipalities and everybody else on the new borrowing scheme—that these grants will continue to flow year over year? How solid is the agreement between the hospital and the ministry? How binding is it?

**Mrs Mottershead:** When the arrangements were made on financing, we also took the opportunity of streamlining a number of regulations that had been established over years that were dependent on certain funding formulae and certain processes, whether they were emergency, health and safety or environmental projects or hospital projects.

In making those changes and in streamlining the regu-

lations, we actually developed one that dealt with capital financing. In that regulation there is an explicit obligation that the government of Ontario will ensure that there are sufficient operating dollars to deal with the payback of the particular debentures. We have language in regulation. We were able to do that over a year ago.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I have a question with—oh, we're done?

**The Chair:** We're almost there.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** This may perhaps be a very simple answer. On vote item 1502, dealing with health system management, health insurance and benefits, I'm just wondering, with the new health card coming in, seeing that there are decreases actually throughout most of this budget, in this vote item anyway, except for employee benefits, where exactly is the increase in dollars for the implementation of the health card beginning in February 1995? This may be a simple answer.

**Mrs Mottershead:** They are not in the Ministry of Health estimates as of this point in time. The government did undertake to have a look once we've put together the complete financing approach to this. I believe in the overall government contingency—if you look at the budget, there's a line called "contingency"—that would hold the provision for our health card estimates.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** We have treasury board approval for an amount. As we do our work on implementation, we'll come back and refine those numbers, which will then be part of our actuals for this year.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I knew the answer was that you don't have it in here, because I can't find it. It does lead one to the question of how committed you are to February 1995.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Absolutely, totally, and we have the funding approved by the treasury. It shows in the Treasurer's corporate accounts at this point.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I don't particularly want you to be all that committed. So if you want to leave it in contingency and think up a new one, I'd be happy about that.

**The Chair:** I should indicate that the matter that you raise in a general sense has been the subject of review by the Provincial Auditor and two other committees. A joint meeting of the three committees dealing with financing matters is undertaking to look at that reporting aspect.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** You mean the financing association?

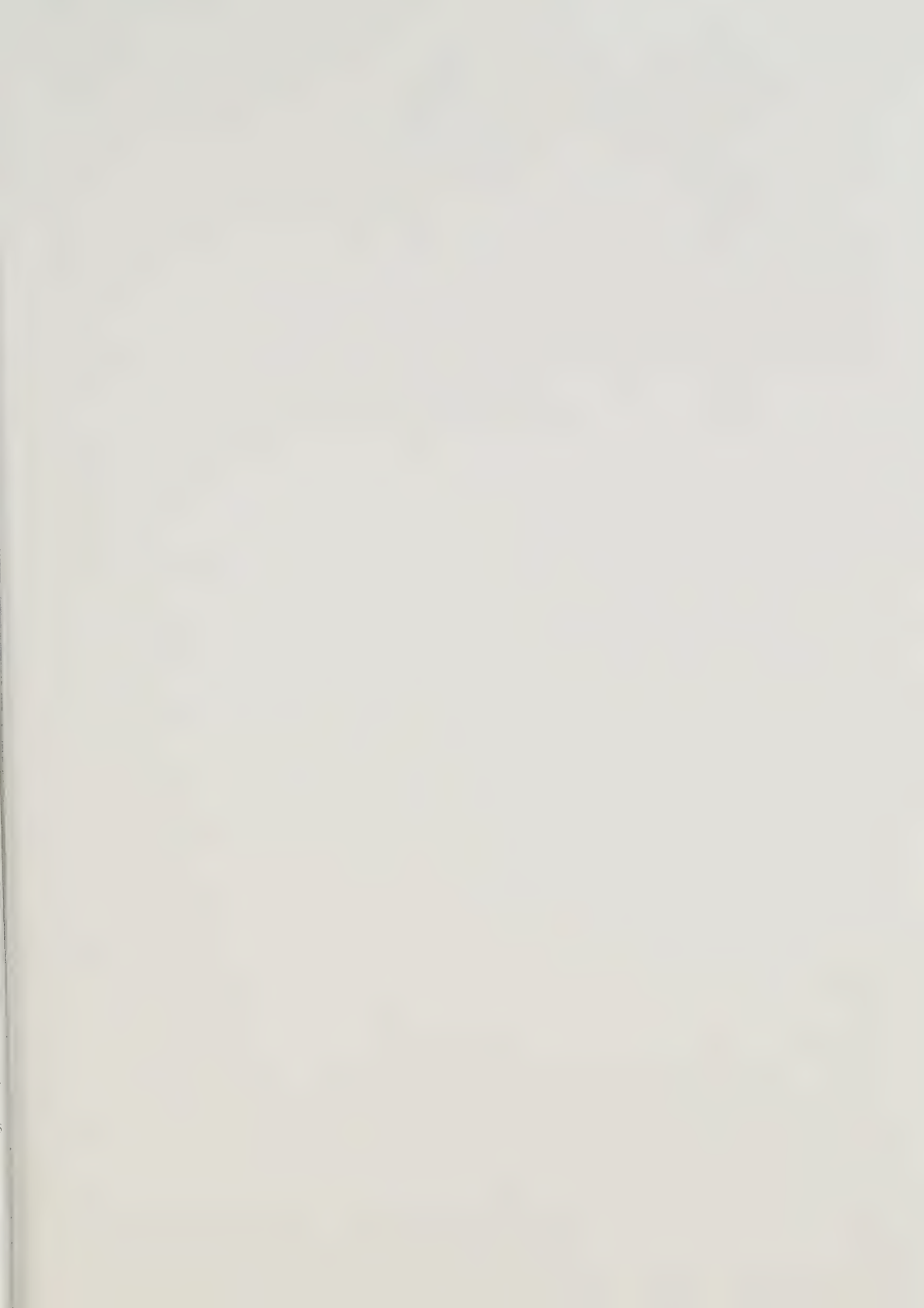
**Mr Jim Wilson:** The financing authority.

**The Chair:** Yes. It is now 6 of the clock. We have four hours, three minutes remaining. It may necessitate meetings being scheduled for next Tuesday, June 21. The Chair is open to discussions prior to the start tomorrow of any interest in modifications to that schedule.

There being no further points, this meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1803.











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### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

O'Connor, Larry (Durham-York ND) for Mr Abel

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Ramsay

Wessenger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Hayes

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Carr

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

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**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

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ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 15 June 1994**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 15 juin 1994**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Health

**Comité permanent des  
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Ministère de la Santé

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 15 June 1994

Mercredi 15 juin 1994

The committee met at 1547 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We have approximately four hours remaining to complete the Ministry of Health estimates. Mr Wilson was our last questioner. Before I recognize the government party for questions, has the ministry any written responses that flow from questions that have not been answered?

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** Not at this point, but Dr David Naylor from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Studies is here in response to an earlier request that he provide information to the committee.

**The Chair:** Okay. Is there any problem getting the written responses? Is it fair for the Chair to ask on behalf of the committee if we might have those prior to the completion of estimates, which will occur next Tuesday?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Certainly that was our intention.

**Mrs Margaret Mottershead:** We will have the majority of those. As a matter of fact, we do have some of the responses, except that unfortunately the number of copies weren't made on some of them, so even by the end of today we might have some of those responses tabled with the clerk.

**The Chair:** We're not afraid of doing the photocopying, if that was what you were trying to share with us.

**Mrs Mottershead:** That's fine. The capital list is available. I know the assistant deputy minister has it with him, if the clerk doesn't mind doing that.

**The Chair:** The clerk doesn't mind. It's helpful to the committee that we can get as much of that information in their hands as possible and it makes for crisper questions and actually it's extremely helpful. We appreciate that, Deputy.

My first speaker is Mr Wessenger.

**Mr Paul Wessenger (Simcoe Centre):** I have a question to the minister. It's related to the whole question of hospital restructuring. I know we have the joint committee with the OHA with respect to dealing with the issues of restructuring throughout the province, and I know specifically we've been dealing with particular areas, particularly the Windsor area, but I would like to know what progress the joint committee is making with respect to setting out some principles with respect to restructuring the hospital system; in particular the issue of how we intend to deal with the growth aspects of the province, the question of whether one of the principles will be rewarding efficiency of hospital operation, and lastly, the question of whether we're looking to move

towards a more regionalized model of delivery of hospital services.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** There's certainly a lot in that question and perhaps I could ask the assistant deputy minister, Mark Rochon, who has been dealing with that and would be our representative on that committee, to respond in some more detail.

Let me say that I think we have made enormous progress with respect to hospital restructuring, whether it is that hospitals began voluntarily to do restructuring and then realized that it's like dropping a pebble into a pond: the ripples go out and out and you have to look not just at the hospitals but at the other institutions and then at the community-based services. Windsor, of course, is the example that has gone the furthest, but all of the DHCs are doing it and so it was felt to be appropriate to try to provide some framework and some guidelines within which that would occur. That's what Mr Rochon can speak to.

**Mr Mark Rochon:** I just want to make sure I have your questions down properly, Mr Wessenger. I have restructuring, the principles around restructuring, and—

**Mr Wessenger:** Yes. What I would like to start with is an update with respect to the progress being made by the joint committee with the Ontario Hospital Association with respect to some of the restructuring issues.

Arising out of that were some areas I had some particular concern with, and that is that I think certain aspects have to be recognized. I know in the past we have recognized population growth, and particularly aging population growth, with respect to funding decisions concerning hospital restructuring.

I know that many of the hospitals I discuss the issues with have always been concerned about the aspect that they would like to see the funding system moved towards rewarding efficiencies in hospitals rather than rewarding the inefficiency.

Lastly, the issue that's often raised is the whole question that perhaps greater efficiencies could be achieved in the system by having a more regionalized delivery of some of the services that are now delivered at the tertiary care hospitals in the larger centres. I know there is some movement in that regard in certain of the services.

That initially probably gives you enough to deal with.

**Mr Rochon:** If I could begin with restructuring, and you asked specifically about the JPPC, the joint policy and planning committee work, for those who are not aware of the joint policy and planning committee, the JPPC is a joint organization. It's a secretariat that is made

up of the Ministry of Health, hospitals and the Ontario Hospital Association, and it has a number of working committees that are dealing with reform topics in general.

One of them is the management committee, and under the management committee there is a subgroup looking at restructuring. They have recently completed a paper that outlines between 10 and 12 principles dealing with restructuring the hospital system in Ontario. Those principles deal with issues such as access, quality, critical mass, the voluntary nature of restructuring exercises in Ontario, and issues of affordability.

The Ontario Hospital Association and ministry have looked at this in draft form. Their view is that it ought to be the subject of a much wider debate and discussion across Ontario and with other stakeholders involved in restructuring exercises. That debate will occur, I suspect, over late summer and early fall. But the fundamental principles around restructuring are those of access, quality, critical mass and affordability.

Many of the restructuring exercises under way are looking at issues of, given certain facilities' experience and expertise in areas, are there opportunities to consolidate programs and services? You asked a question about specific restructuring activities, and I'm wondering if there's a particular community in mind that you'd like to focus in on. If I don't have the answer here, I can go and make sure you get it. Are you interested, for example, in Windsor?

**Mr Wessenger:** Perhaps I will raise the particular hospital that raised the concern with me when I visited, and that's the hospital in Newmarket. They raised the issue of the fact that they felt they were delivering services at a very efficient level and had achieved a high level of efficiency compared to many other hospitals. They were concerned about the fact that the funding formulas perhaps did not adequately recognize the aspects of growth and the aspects of a hospital that was more successful in achieving efficiencies. I know from my discussions with many hospitals across the province that the same issues have been raised at other hospitals.

I think their concern is that with these principles that are going to be developed, are there likely to be some principles involved which will recognize some of these aspects? I think the other aspect that has been raised, quite frankly, is the concern that perhaps some regions are relatively overfunded and some regions are relatively underfunded. That's another issue that's certainly a concern.

**Mr Rochon:** The question about growth and equity is a very important one. If we go back about four or five years, the Ontario Hospital Association and the ministry began a process that was termed "transitional funding." The exercise was aimed at achieving a more equitable basis of funding hospitals in Ontario. Over about a four-year period, approximately \$150 million was allocated through what is termed "the equity formula" to hospitals on the low side of the cost equation.

What we do in Ontario is, we place hospitals into peer groups according to the services they provide. We have, for example, two teaching hospital peer groups and five or six community hospital peer groups, and the hospital's

costs are compared to the peer. Up until this year, if a hospital's were below the average, it received additional funds, recognizing that there was an issue of equity. Through that formula, as I mentioned earlier, we allocated approximately \$150 million.

What we are doing this year is called reallocation. What we have done, recognizing that for 1994-95 we are operating in a zero-sum environment, is we've decided to look at hospitals at the high end of the equation, to take money from hospitals that perhaps have higher costs than others for the work they perform and reallocate it through the system.

We have identified, through a joint process involving the Ontario Hospital Association and hospitals, 22 hospitals that have been notified that their funding will be reduced in recognition of our desire to move towards a more equitable system of hospital funding. These 22 hospitals have been provided with a six-month notice period, and they will also be provided with an opportunity to appeal this decision.

The recommendation that we have implemented was also taken with the full support of the board of directors of the Ontario Hospital Association. So we have the full support of the industry in this move.

You will hear from those who are not in favour of the move that there are too many warts in the formula to allow us to use it for something as dramatic in Ontario as reallocation.

What we have done is establish some pretty wide boundaries around the average cost to make sure that the warts are well insured by parameters so that a hospital would not find itself going less than two standard deviations from the mean and it would not find a reduction in its total budget of more than 3.5% on a fully annualized basis. So we're trying to move in the direction.

**1600**

The other piece of very interesting work that is being discussed right now is around looking at establishing specific rates for work that hospitals perform. What I think this will do will be to promote a greater accountability for the work that hospitals produce and for the funding that they receive.

The idea that is being suggested is that specific rates would be established for procedures. Those rates would be adjusted, for example, if you operated teaching programs or if you were in remote areas and so on, and the work you perform would be subjected to an annual planning exercise whereby you would commit to produce so many units of service in your institution at such a rate.

Again, we think this is in the same direction as promoting a more equitable funding system for Ontario hospitals. As part of that, we would also deal with the question of growth and how to deal with growth in areas like Simcoe county, York, Durham and so forth.

It's certainly an issue that has a lot of support for development in the field and, in my view, working these out in consultation with the group that actually has to implement it is a very important principle we're trying to continue to promote.

**Mr Wessenger:** Thank you. I think that's certainly



given me a good background.

**The Chair:** Very good. Any other questions?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No, I meant of this deputant. If not, then—

**Mr Larry O'Connor (Durham-York):** I think Wayne probably does about the Windsor hospital.

**The Chair:** Then please go ahead, Mr Lessard.

**Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Walkerville):** Madam Minister, you'll be happy to know that I don't share the view of the Liberal member, Ms Sullivan, when she talked about people in Ontario facing a crisis in confidence in health care. I think things are going fairly well in the Windsor area, and part of that is the result of the major restructuring efforts that are going on there that I know you are quite well aware of.

I wonder whether you could tell us, or someone from the ministry could tell us, what might have been learned by the ministry through that experience and whether you're pleased with the progress that has been made so far.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Maybe I should start off on that one.

**The Chair:** I'd like to dismiss the gentleman. I had a speaking order, but—

**Mr O'Connor:** I thought this would be a hospital question.

**The Chair:** That's fine. Thank you very much.

**Mr Derek Fletcher (Guelph):** Some may after. Let Wayne ask his question.

**The Chair:** Go ahead. The question is to the minister. Fine. Thank you very much.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was just going to say I may need to call Mr Rochon back if we get into details, but let me say generally to the member that I think the Windsor reconfiguration exercise has been an incredibly creative example, one that everybody is looking at, where a community has come together, stood back from its own institutions to a certain extent and said, "What's in the best interest of our community, and how can we plan for a health care system for the future?"

The result has been recommendations that they go from four hospitals to two, which is very dramatic, but along with that has gone a commitment from the government to put in place, as a result of the savings achieved from the reduction in the number of institutions, a community-based network of services that will be there to provide a whole integrated system. I think it has really been a remarkable exercise.

What has been learned? I think what has been learned is that, while this process may start with the hospitals deciding to rationalize, they quickly realize that that can't be done in isolation, that they have to involve in their planning and in their final plan all of the other institutions and then beyond that to the community-based services.

If, for example, you acknowledge that in the future the length of stay in hospital is going to decrease even further, then it follows as the night the day that you have

to build up the community-based home care and acute care services in order to support that change. So you can't do one without doing the other. I think that's the first lesson that has been learned.

I think the second is a confirmation of my profound faith in the common sense—and I still use the word despite its bastardization by others as being linked as an adjective to "revolution"—of the people of this province that if you share with them good information and good data and say to them, "Here's what's happening; here are the choices we face; we want to listen to you and come out with the best solution for our community," and you do that openly, honestly and in the fullest possible way, people understand, learn and come to the best conclusions and a consensus in their communities. So that was the second.

The third was the value of doing it locally, that the district health council and its steering committee had remarkable courage and put an incredible amount of volunteer time into doing it and that local leadership is critical to coming out with a solution that fits the local needs. As I said in my opening remarks to this committee, Dennis Timbrell had noted that Ontario and Manitoba were the only provinces remaining that put faith in local decision-making and recommendations, so that local leadership was critical.

I think, finally, what we learned was the importance of human resource planning as part of this restructuring. In Windsor the strong history of the labour movement, from being involved in health care, the initiation of Green Shield and protection for people through health insurance and its involvement, as a matter of course, in some of the discussions about local issues brought it to the restructuring exercise, but again rather late in the process.

What I say to other district health councils is, involve the employees and do your human resource planning at the initial stage of your restructuring exercise. They're the people who are going to feel the first impacts of restructuring, they have to be part of the decision-making and they have to be shown how in fact, if there are fewer jobs in hospitals—there may well be more jobs in the community—to do that labour adjustment.

It has been a very valuable exercise and one that, while it doesn't fit with what other communities may do, provides some valuable lessons for other communities and is being looked at carefully. We are now into the implementation stage. That is perhaps going to be no less rocky than some parts of the planning stage were, but Windsor is to be congratulated for being the first community that has moved in that direction.

**Mr Lessard:** I understand the importance of there being local leadership and local involvement in the decision-making. As part of the process, the district health council hired a new director. His name is Hume Martin.

In a speech on Monday he talked about the importance of moving ahead speedily with the amalgamation of Windsor Western Hospital Centre and Metropolitan General Hospital, which is part of the restructuring. He senses that there's some reluctance by the two hospitals to move ahead with that.



He made this statement, "The effectiveness of hospital CEOs was judged not by their commitment to systems integration but by their ability to go to Queen's Park and get more money for their hospital." In making that statement, he still recognizes that there's some reluctance to move ahead and recognize the cost saving that would result from that.

He estimates the saving would be \$22 million from the merger, \$109 million in capital and redeveloped hospitals and \$6 million for a new state-of-the-art information system. He thinks that we might lose those savings if we don't move ahead. The district labour council at its meeting last night—well, they may try to urge the government to get involved in seeing what it can do to speed up that process. I wonder if there is something that we may be able to do.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say that of course the ministry is still very close to the implementation and has been working with both Mr Martin and the institutions as they make the next steps towards implementation of the plan.

I understand that change is difficult. Change is particularly difficult for hospitals that have been used to sending the CEO to Queen's Park and getting the money. But I think the vast majority of CEOs understand that life has changed and that it is critical for hospitals that they become part of the system and that system integration is the way to take us into the new century.

1610

I was in London yesterday and was very impressed and encouraged by the recognition of hospitals there of how system integration has got to be the way of the future, and certainly I think the hospital wards and the community in Windsor understand that. The whole reconfiguration in Windsor is dependent upon the savings being achieved by the work of the hospitals, so I certainly concur in Mr Martin's encouragement to them to move on quickly.

But let me also say that I think the whole plan there has been a made-in-Windsor solution, that what came out of it was a win-win for Windsor. I remain confident that Windsor can deal with the problems that will arise as they implement, and again it is preferable that those problems be addressed by Windsor. The ministry is keeping in close touch, is certainly prepared to offer advice and information when needed and, if necessary, to attempt to mediate if issues come up that require that. But I think Windsor, because it has done such ground-breaking work, as I say, I have every confidence that it will continue to do that.

**Mr O'Connor:** I saw Dr Naylor come into the room and wondered if perhaps we'd have an opportunity to entertain a little bit of dialogue. As you come forward to the microphone, the Ontario Health Survey indicated that those with a lower socioeconomic status don't seem to have the same access or don't go to specialists as often as those of a higher status. I wondered whether or not you've had a chance to evaluate that and how we in Ontario would stack up to other jurisdictions.

**Dr David Naylor:** My name is David Naylor. I'm the chief executive officer of the Institute for Clinical

Evaluative Sciences. The institute is a non-profit research corporation. It functions at arm's length from the ministry and from the Ontario Medical Association, which are its two cosponsors.

It's an interesting question. There are a couple of parts to it. The first one is simply, do we have confirmation that there is a differential utilization of GP and specialist services by socioeconomic class and education? The answer is yes. I want to highlight that the differential in absolute terms is small, that the OHS data are somewhat unreliable in terms of pinpointing absolute differences anyway, because they are self-reported data. Unless you look across actual utilization data by social class that break out the specific GP-specialist utilization profiles in absolute numbers, it's very hard to be sure of the precise absolute magnitude of the difference.

In relative terms, and I emphasize that relative summary measures are always to be interpreted with caution, we're looking at differentials that are moderate, not large. Why do they exist? They could exist for any number of reasons. I emphasize that my discussion here is entirely speculative. They may exist because of difference in comfort zone in requesting consultation; they may exist because individuals in lower education strata may feel less empowered to call for a further opinion or call for a consultation; they may exist for a whole host of reasons related to health status.

I would personally be very uneasy about believing that the distribution of conditions for those in lower socioeconomic strata, who have always had an excess burden in morbidity in our population, is somehow skewed such that they could be better managed differentially by general practitioners than by specialists. So I think there is a concern about equity here; there is a concern about outcomes.

Do we have specific data linking these different utilization patterns to overall health outcomes? The short answer is: The data are only ecological. We know that there has always been a correlation between socioeconomic strata and education level and health status, the association I mentioned, but we can't really say which rate is right, whether more specialist utilization by more educated folks is actually a better thing to encourage for those in lower strata or whether this is in fact something that we should discourage for those in the higher socioeconomic strata as we try to move to more of a single portal of entry to the system and more emphasis on primary care and on the family physician as gatekeeper.

So to highlight, the normative judgement about which mix of services is best cannot be drawn from these data. The one normative judgement, however, that I would make is, there is an issue there about equity of access and utilization that does need to be followed up.

**Mr O'Connor:** Is there any comparative information that we could place against other jurisdictions, the UK or the US?

**Dr Naylor:** Compared to the US, we obviously look terrific. There is no issue about that. Not only is the US primary care system organized very differently from ours, with much more reliance on the general internists, on the

paediatrician, on the gynaecologist rather than on the family physician, but also we have the persistent problem of 30-million-odd uninsured, 15 million underinsured and the existence of deductibles in coinsurance. We consistently see in the US data a much more marked gradient in utilization, not only of GP versus specialist services but of all types of services, compared to Canada. This is obviously one of the strengths of our system.

I would argue that on balance the OHS data would suggest that in many respects medicare, over the last 25 years, has done much of what it set out to do in eliminating the role of class and income as barriers to access, but the job is not complete and clearly there are some opportunities to be pursued for further improvement.

**Mr O'Connor:** The work that ICES is doing is quite extensive, and I don't know whether there is the same degree of depth being put into it in other jurisdictions. Are there any others and are they finding anything that's astoundingly different?

**Dr Naylor:** I could take a long time covering that question.

**The Chair:** You have four minutes left, if you have the inclination to do it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** But we have four hours.

**Dr Naylor:** I'll follow the Chair's direction and take four minutes.

**Mr O'Connor:** He's going to cut you off anyway.

**The Chair:** You have four minutes, and I have Mr Fletcher waiting.

**Dr Naylor:** For the short answer, let's focus on Canada if we can. The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation is doing some excellent work, with a particular focus on population health status and its determinants. They're trying to tease out the interrelationship between utilization and health status in substantial detail. It's a difficult area because utilization is confounded with socioeconomic status, as we've seen in the Ontario Health Survey, so it becomes a soup of causes, effects and epiphenomena not easy to tease apart.

Quebec has a council on health technology assessment headed by Renaldo Battista, again looking at a variety of patterns of technology diffusion and assessment, less of the broad population health focus, but they have also analysed small area variations and surgical rates.

Nova Scotia is talking about setting up similar activity at Dalhousie. Saskatchewan has the Health Services Utilization and Research Commission. I think you'll find that in province after province there is a variety of groups that have been set up to examine the utilization, look at population health status and try to tease apart some of the factors that might contribute to a more effective and efficient system.

**The Chair:** Do you have another question, because we have two and a half minutes left for Mr Fletcher.

**Mr O'Connor:** He needs more than two minutes. Maybe what I could ask then is, what are some of the next steps that are going to be studied and evaluated?

**Dr Naylor:** One of the crucial things is to follow up on the large variation in procedures that we found. For

example, coronary bypass surgery, hysterectomy, a few others where we have major variations in utilization.

We obviously have to get provider buy-in to do that, to access charts and review them, but for many procedures there are very well established utilization audit criteria that can be brought into play. It will allow us to get some sense of whether or not high rates necessarily imply some proportion of equivocal or inappropriate case selection—not always the case, I emphasize—or whether low rates suggest an access issue, if we examine patients who are undergoing medical therapy who are not having surgical alternatives. So we have a lot of follow-up at the local level to do.

We also plan on reissuing the atlas with a very strong outcomes focus, looking much more closely at the OHIP data, trying to tease apart some of the clinical patterns of utilization rather than focusing on broad expenditure trends. So there is a lot more to do, I think, to make sense of what we found and to get at some of the clinical issues behind the aggregate statistics.

1620

**Mr O'Connor:** Thank you. I think the Chair is telling me that's about what we've got for time.

**The Chair:** That's exactly what the Chair was saying. Mrs Sullivan.

**Mrs Barbara Sullivan (Halton Centre):** I'm pleased that Dr Naylor is here and I'm going to ask him to stay at the table for the next couple of questions.

I think that the ICES atlas was an interesting one, and frankly I was disturbed at some of the response that I saw in the press which raised the issue almost to a circus-like atmosphere rather than looking at this as being a first step along the way.

I wonder if you could, first of all, advise the committee on what the next step is with respect to analysing the existing data, what the process will be in subsequent years with respect to looking at the data on rate variations in various communities and how you see that work being structured, given your organizing oligarchy, if you like, or the Ministry of Health and the Ontario Medical Association, and yet much of your material in fact refers to other areas of health care delivery, including hospitals and so on.

**Dr Naylor:** An interesting question with a number of facets to it. Let me start by dealing with the specific issue of rate variation. First, it's important to corroborate the member's statement that in no way are we implying any particular blame.

The issue of rate variation really should be seen as a screening test or a first step in understanding how the system functions. In many instance when data have been teased apart and charts have been audited, there has been a very limited correlation between higher rates and higher inappropriate use of procedures. So we can't always assume that the high rate is wrong or inappropriate. In some cases the lower rate may be one that raises issues of access, and much follow-up work needs to be done.

We have an external coordinating committee which involves representatives from the ADHCO, the district health council organization, from the Ministry of Health,



from the Ontario Medical Association and also the Ontario Hospital Association. The external coordinating committee will be meeting over the next couple of months developing some work plans to relate to atlas follow-up and bringing them back to JMC for further discussion.

One of the points that's obviously important is that if we are to access charts and to begin to look at indications for procedures, not only do we need to have the support of surgeons, if we're dealing with a surgical issue, to go in and look at surgical charts in a hospital, but in many instances, to make the most sense of a procedure from a clinical standpoint, you may also need access to office charts. So it's very important that we have an atmosphere of cooperation and that this be handled with due caution and respect for the stakeholders.

Longer term, we've raised the issue of whether there might be some broad coordinating function developed, and that's outlined in chapter 9 of the atlas. I won't revisit that here. I would simply say that the atlas really is, as you've suggested, a first step. We see the small area variations as screening tests and nothing more.

**Mrs Sullivan:** You've raised in those remarks a third question that I'll just put very quickly. To enable access to the office charts that may assist you in further investigation, will you need legislative change with regard to patient records?

**Dr Naylor:** I would really want to give that a great deal more thought before speaking to it. It's clear that there are a number of major issues for all the self-regulatory bodies around the question of access to patient records in respect of quality management. These issues touch on very cogent concerns to the public of privacy and confidentiality.

The institute's own work is safeguarded by a research ethics board, and again, we're very wary of those legitimate concerns of patients as our stakeholders of last resort, really, about potential violation of privacy and confidentiality. I would really want to take a lot more time to consider any proposal around legislation before making a comment at this time.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Another question is, with the shift in the hospital operations to increasing emphasis on day surgery and ambulatory care, are the databases and the sources that you've used to draw your first conclusions in fact going to be reliable as that change occurs in the future? Can you capture day surgery through your current data?

**Dr Naylor:** Yes, we can. There are some very interesting analytical issues, though, raised by that question. Day surgery data are really quite comprehensively tabulated for a whole variety of procedures now. Some diagnostic procedures are not tabulated; for example, outpatient coronary angiography, to give an example, has been inconsistently captured, and there will always be an area where we have to continue to press for more complete data captured on the diagnostic procedural side. However, surgical procedures is one example that tends to be very consistently captured.

One of the issues, however, is what the definition of

day surgery is. For example, individuals may stay a couple of hours or less for a procedure, or they may stay 23 hours. What constitutes a day? Accordingly, you'll notice that in the atlas we've taken a fairly cautious analytical position. When we have analysed day surgery, we have combined that with total length of stay data for each surgical procedure, and each day surgery procedure is being attributed as a half-day stay.

The net result is to create an omnibus analysis that combines not only the day surgery procedure as a potential cost to the hospital but the actual length of stay when the procedure is done in the same hospital on an inpatient basis. It's an approximation, to be sure, but I think it's a cautious one and the best one we can have at present.

**Mrs Sullivan:** There's not a lot of data available from community-based care delivery on the treatment-therapeutic side. Certainly, it's not included in this particular atlas. Is it appropriate from your point of view that some kind of mechanisms be started to in fact do this kind of analysis on the community-based, home-based, hospital-in-the-home approaches that are becoming more and more prevalent?

**Dr Naylor:** We'd be very interested in trying to access community service data and to link it as appropriate to HMRI, OHIP and other data sources. This is under way to some extent in Manitoba. One of the focuses of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation is to try to get a better handle on community and social service integration with health services. We're impressed with that work and we'd like to emulate it to some extent here.

Again, there are major issues to be worked out with information and planning within the ministry about identifiers, the extent of those databases, accessing them, and a lot of background work is necessary.

More generally, one of the issues for us, of course, becomes priority-setting and analysis. We have a strong clinical orientation. We have to be a little bit unapologetic about that because of our cosponsorship. There are many other research groups in the province that I think would share an interest in analysing data on health and social service integration. For example, there's a health system research unit at McMaster. Its particular focus, under the leadership of Dr Gina Browne, is on health and social service integration. I'm certain they would be very keen to collaborate with us on that kind of work.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think that the question of the sponsorship of ICES itself is a matter of interest. My personal view is that a more independent sponsorship might be more valuable in terms of a suspicion with respect to the biases or perceived biases of the organization. Would you like to comment on that?

**Dr Naylor:** I would simply say that the question is obviously a very difficult one for me. I sit here as a physician with a major interest in clinical issues personally. Many of my colleagues in the institute, be they physicians or PhD epidemiologists, share those clinical interests. We're interested and see the physicians as very important stakeholders and we value the ongoing collaborative relationship with the Ontario Medical Association.



Beyond that, I think that comment by me would be perhaps injudicious.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If I could just expand on that comment, I would perhaps take issue with the member's comment about the independence. I have every confidence in the integrity of the work and the independence of the scientists who are working at ICES, but I do share the recommendation as part of the practice atlas that we need to look at a more broad stakeholders' committee, council or whatever that would enable us to integrate the kind of work that's being done by ICES with, for example, the work being done by Cheppa at McMaster and others are doing similar work, and bring to bear on the issues the advice and the point of view of other stakeholders.

As we work through the JMC with the future and the implementation and the work to deal with the recommendations and the findings of the practice atlas, the broadening of that base will be something we'll be looking at with interest.

1630

**Mrs Sullivan:** Some of the strategic recommendations in chapter 9 are in fact as interesting to people at Queen's Park as any other part of the atlas is. You have recommended a number of vehicles, not the least of which is a regional funding and delivery, with options for more regional participation in strategic and ongoing planning. I don't think that's the first time that recommendation has come forward. I think I recall a speech maybe a year ago that made very similar recommendations.

Another recommendation that I think is quite appealing is for the Ontario health services council. Certainly what I see in the entire health field is enormous compartmentalization and fragmentation and very little sense of common goals. I wonder if you just wanted to expand on that recommendation.

**Dr Naylor:** Let me start on the regionalization issue. The wording of the atlas I think is very cautious, and with good reason. We notice that there is a trend to increasing adoption of regionalization in a variety of provinces, but what we suggest is that if there is to be a move in any way towards regionalization, it has to be regarded as an experiment on its own and to be evaluated as such. We certainly urge very careful study of the experience with decentralized management in other jurisdictions. I would include the United Kingdom in that respect.

I would also highlight, in keeping with the comments of the minister about the independence of the institute, that I sit here as CEO of the institute but also as a scientist among scientists, and that there is an enormous diversity of opinion among my colleagues about decentralization. I can find within our scientist group individuals who are ardent exponents of decentralization and others who are extremely concerned about the potential compartmentalization on regional lines that might occur with decentralization. I have to confess that, as always, dealing with scientists is a bit like herding cats. There is no consensus and there is ample disagreement on policy issues as opposed to issues of clear science.

Beyond that, dealing with the health services council, we have advocated that as an umbrella body. There is, in that respect, a clear consensus among the scientists at the institute and indeed a great many of our senior staff.

We are well aware, however, that there is a danger in any such body that it may become another layer of bureaucracy or it may become an irrelevant paper factory. We're keenly aware that there's very little room for additional funding of any such bodies in the current climate of funding, that the priority has to be providing services as best we can.

We made the case, I think, in the most low-key way possible about some of the advantages, really leaving this as a trial balloon for those within the Legislature and within the ministry to consider. We believe it would be beneficial. We think it could be done with a small investment. We would be happy to work with such a council but, beyond that, we really see this as something to be debated by policymakers.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you very much. I'd like to turn to a few more mundane and less esoteric—

**The Acting Chair (Mr Wayne Lessard):** Are those all the questions that you have for Dr Naylor?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Yes, that's all I have for Dr Naylor.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr Wilson, do you think that you'll have any questions for Dr Naylor?

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** Not at this time.

**The Acting Chair:** Would it be okay if he leaves for the rest of the day if none of the other committee members have questions? Thank you, Dr Naylor.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I'd like to return to a question that I raised in the introduction to the estimates with respect to the Regulated Health Professions Act and the proposals by the dental hygienists for changes to legislation.

I asked why in particular the minister had agreed to consider proposed legislative changes to the Dental Hygiene Act, using a ministerial route rather than Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council, and the minister indicated that in fact that consideration would not be for legislation at this time, ie, in this session, or perhaps not in the next session.

I guess I want, first of all, an assurance that the HPRAC process will be used for changes to the legislation, that there won't be shortcutting through a ministerial route. Secondly, the minister indicated as follows, and this is a quote from the transcript:

"But I know the concern of the dental hygienists and am happy to be able to tell the committee that, as an interim measure, the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario and the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario have come to an agreement which allows dentists to issue a general, rather than a case-by-case, specific order for most procedures."

In fact, that's incorrect. The college was asked to accept an agreement which provided a general order. The college indicated that its legal advisers had given them an opinion that such a move would be illegal and in fact contrary to its own regulated act. I'd just like some clarity on this issue.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I regret if the statement that I made was incorrect. It was certainly my best information at the time, and I'm not sure that I can give any more advice at this point. I will certainly follow up on that and be sure that when we come back on Tuesday, we have whatever information is required.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Good. Thank you.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Can I deal with the HPRAC issue, though, or are you going to raise that again? I think it's important to be clear that the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council is an advisory council to the minister, so matters are referred to it by the minister. That does not necessarily mean that every issue dealing with the Regulated Health Professions Act is necessarily advised to HPRAC.

For example, on some of the regulations in the initial stages we had extensive discussions with HPRAC as they were the first time that regulations had been developed. Once the templates had been established and we moved into all of the other professions, then the regulations were not referred to HPRAC. So it is entirely at the minister's discretion when issues are referred and the directions given in that referral.

Let me make a comparison that the member will be familiar with. I don't know which piece of legislation it is, but certainly when I was Minister of the Environment, there was the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee, which was frequently very valuable to the minister as a source of advice and as a means by which the public could be consulted on an issue of public interest. But not every request for an environmental assessment was necessarily referred to the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee for advice, and I see the relationship and the incredible value of HPRAC as being somewhat analogous.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Minister, my understanding is that in fact the statutory requirement is quite different in this scenario, and indeed there are very, very strong concerns among the professions that the approach that is being taken with respect to ministerial action or decision-making without referral to HPRAC is against the law. I just don't happen to have, in all this mad pile of papers here, the particular section and the particular act.

However, I do think that it's a matter that should be looked at quite seriously, because the dental hygienists and the college of dentistry are not the first instance where the issue has been raised. It has been brought forward by other professional bodies, and there is deep concern about the short-circuiting of what people believe to be and see as a statutory provision for consideration by HPRAC on the major issues associated with the legislation and regulations.

1640

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think the member in her concluding sentence outlined precisely what the dilemma might well be, referral to HPRAC on the major issues, and then we're into some definition as to, does this reflect a major change in direction or is this in fact implementation and in conformity with the act?

For example, if there is an issue upon which there is

general consensus within the profession, is the member suggesting that therefore must be referred to HPRAC even though there is general agreement among all of the stakeholders that the action that's been proposed, including agreement with the minister, is the advisable one? It would seem to me that would be just an additional layer of bureaucracy that I'm sure nobody would want to impose.

On the other hand, obviously when there is something as contentious as—incorporation of physicians is perhaps one example, and the excellent work that HPRAC did with respect to Bill 100. Those are issues that, without HPRAC's advice, it would be very difficult to move forward. I think as the legislation is implemented, we will all gain experience with it as it goes through the process, but I certainly consider HPRAC an extremely valuable source of advice, information and forum for public discussion of issues of public interest.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I would like to see some kind of a legal opinion from the ministry with respect to the statutory obligations and the relationship between the minister and HPRAC. I think other people who brought the issue to my attention would like to see that as well.

In an order paper question that I put to you—I'm not certain when, but it was probably in March—I asked about, first of all, the operations of the Hospital Training and Adjustment Panel, costs and how many hospital workers were placed and assisted and so on, a full accounting of the HTAP program, because certainly as HSTAP is coming to the fore, I think the matters are of continuing interest, particularly when there is considerable downsizing among the hospital sector and in other health sectors and a trend perhaps to more generic workers in some fields.

I was very interested in the response which I thought was remarkable in its lack of clarity, and I'm sure that was deliberate. What we saw here was a budget of \$30 million under the initial HTAP project; what appears to be about \$2 million of that funding spent for career counselling and résumé writing services for 1,100 people; 2,200 people who had completed a needs assessment but only half of them went on to anything else, and then a certain smaller number went on to the second tier. So \$2 million was spent in the actual work associated with the assessment and counselling work.

However, it appears that the overhead in providing that amount of service to a significantly smaller number of people than the total number who were displaced in the 1992-94 period, the administrative costs were three times that. My understanding, although it's certainly not included in the evaluation report, is that in fact there were only 17 people placed for all that money that was spent. So I think there are legitimate questions with respect to what occurred in the past—I know that the evaluation report was done—but in fact what will take place as HTAP comes into place.

We certainly know about the \$22 million that has been promised to go back into the system in Windsor. We understand that those promises included that displaced hospital workers would maintain seniority, salary and benefits if they moved into the community sector.



Certainly that is the understanding on the ground in Windsor.

If that's not the case, I think that should be made very clear at this time, because community agencies across the province are looking with deep, deep fright, purchasers are looking with deep, deep fright at the cost implications of that kind of a guarantee, basically a job guarantee for ever within a system, or at least not a particular job guarantee but certainly a work guarantee at the same level of salary, benefits and seniority.

I think that you can understand why some municipalities, by example, as they're looking at their contributions to homes for the aged, are aghast, why community agencies are aghast if that kind of a promise is being made. I would like a full clarification of what guarantees have been made to workers as restructuring and movement occurs in the Windsor restructuring, because that will become the template for the province.

**The Acting Chair:** The answer to that should be in three minutes or less.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond first of all by talking about Windsor, because I don't quite know where the member gets her information from. She certainly is adept at setting up a straw man or straw woman and giving us an opportunity to say, "Well, that's not what's happening."

Certainly, as the Windsor restructuring occurs, human resource planning is going to be an absolutely critical and integral part of the changes. I think I indicated that. But the terms under which that occurs and the way in which it's done are what in fact the Windsor DHC or the implementation committee and the executive director are now doing.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Excuse me, Mr Chairman, I have one more question, but I would like to see in writing the full detail of what promises have been made and what commitments have been made in the Windsor situation with respect to human resources restructuring.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** There is absolutely no such paper to provide the member with.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Could one be prepared then?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If I haven't made a promise in writing, are you suggesting I make one and give you a copy?

**Mrs Sullivan:** I would like to know what the government policy is with respect to this issue, because certainly the expectation and the belief among the Windsor workers are that those promises have been made.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me not treat what is an absolutely important matter lightly. I had extensive discussions with the Ontario Federation of Labour, with the health unions within the Ontario Federation of Labour and with the labour adjustment committee in Windsor-Essex and a number of other restructurings. I certainly know the worry and the fear that workers in this province have about restructuring and about changes within the health care system, and that the kind of employment security agreement the member is describing is something that they would very much like to have.

It has not been something to which I have been able to

commit the ministry or the government at this point. But as I've said on a number of occasions, publicly and here, human resource planning is critical. Providing the opportunity for people who are working in institutions to get the training, to get the counselling, to get the help that they need in order to make them both aware of opportunities in other parts of the system and ready to take advantage of those opportunities is something that we are asking all the district health councils in their human resource planning to do in a general way, and hospitals, with respect to restructuring, to factor into their work.

1650

For the member to suggest that if there isn't a promise this isn't happening would be misleading. I hope she's not doing that. Of course it is, particularly for our government, a very high priority, working to make sure that as more jobs open up—and as I've said in long-term care on many occasions there will in fact be more jobs than there are now—certainly our commitment is that any displaced workers should have access to new jobs that are created in the community and that we have to find ways of doing that while acknowledging that there is currently an enormous imbalance between the benefits and the seniority and the security in institutions and in many community-based agencies.

That's why I'm so proud that our government, even in tough times, has moved forward with pay equity so that we can make, and have made, significant moves in increasing the standard of wages for, particularly, women employees in long-term care and in voluntary organizations. It is the fulfilment of those kinds of commitments that makes it possible for us to talk realistically about the kind of labour adjustment that's needed as the shift in health care occurs, unlike in other provinces, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Alberta being the examples, where you're seeing massive layoffs without the safety net being put in place to make sure that restructuring is not done on the backs of the workers.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Chairman, I think, due to the length of that answer, Mrs Sullivan deserves one short question that she's dying to ask at the moment.

**The Acting Chair:** You're agreeing to let her use up the first part of your time to do that?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Yes, she can have three minutes.

**Mrs Sullivan:** We'll subtract our time from Tuesday, if you want. I want to know, because the minister has raised the London teaching hospitals' recommendation for reconfiguring that has been approved by the Thames Valley DHC, if the minister is prepared to go ahead with an acceptance of the proposal and if the minister is prepared to bring the particular amendment to the Public Hospitals Act forward that will enable that new funding vehicle to be put into place to ensure that that reconfiguration can proceed.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think the member is jumping several steps ahead of where the institutions in London are in fact at with respect to their discussions on restructuring. As the committee knows, I was there yesterday, which is why I was late here, meeting with both the



Thames Valley District Health Council and representatives of the hospitals.

I think after a lot of discussion some very creative work has been done and a breakthrough has been achieved in the agreements on a governance structure for the institutions. That is an initial step. There would be a lot more work to be done and a lot more work to be done with the broader community before there was any reconfiguration of the system or recommendations as to how that ought to be done.

We have accepted with interest the proposal on governance, and I'm glad to be able to tell the member that while we are considering the implications of that and how that might, if it was appropriate, be achieved, we have—and yesterday I was able to confirm this with the DHC—accepted a proposal that there be a committee structured under the chairmanship of a representative of the DHC to work on the next stages of preparing for a reconfiguration, that kind of restructuring study and work to be done. I was able yesterday to say to the DHC that we had approved \$100,000 in funding for that planning to begin.

I think there are some very encouraging initial steps that have been taken among all the hospitals in London. There is more work to be done and a great deal of community consultation that will have to occur before we are into the kind of system-wide reconfiguration that the member refers to.

But having heard from the Healthy Communities Coalition and the work that the hospitals are doing in networking and creating partnerships with community-based organizations, I was, as I've said, very encouraged by their openness to looking at the entire system and not merely at the teaching hospitals in isolation from the rest of the system. I look forward to being able to allowing that and facilitating that to continue.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Thank you, and thank you for the time, to Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** You're welcome. Minister, I just want to go back to Windsor and Essex county again and ask, if you could, for just a very brief status report. I don't have it with me, but I remember reading the letter that was signed by the hospital administrators, CEOs and the Windsor-Essex county medical society that talked about their concerns about adding another layer of bureaucracy and cost in that restructuring. What was the ministry's response to that and what is the status specifically of that governance issue?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** A lot has happened since that particular letter was signed and I accepted the recommendations from the reconfiguration proposal. The implementation committee has been put in place. Mr Hume Martin, as you heard in an earlier question, has been appointed as CEO, and in fact I think a number of the concerns that were raised before people had an opportunity to read the report from the steering committee and from the DHC have, I hope, been allayed. But I could ask the assistant deputy minister, Mr Rochon, who was in—"daily" would be saying too much—certainly weekly contact with that implementation committee to bring you up to date on the status.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I'd appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Mr Rochon, you've been introduced already and you've been present for the question. Please proceed.

**Mr Rochon:** Two components of the reconfiguration report include the mergers of four facilities into two in Windsor. One is the Hotel Dieu-Grace alliance. As you know, the Hotel Dieu is owned by the Sisters of St Joseph and the Grace is owned by the Salvation Army of Canada and Bermuda. In trying to deal with the merger or alliance of those two organizations, the organizations had to go and talk to them about significant bylaw changes at "head office" with two separate owners outside of the community.

It was a rather complicated matter for them, but I'm pleased to report to this committee that the two corporations—the Sisters of St Joseph and the Salvation Army—submitted to the Ministry of Health bylaw amendments that deal with the formation of the alliance in Windsor. With the authority the minister has delegated to me to approve bylaws, we signed off on the approval, forming the alliance.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Can you just tell me what the alliance structure is now?

**Mr Rochon:** Yes. The alliance structure is one whereby in effect the operation of the Grace hospital will be undertaken by the Hotel Dieu. The Hotel Dieu sort of management structure will operate both sites, and the governance structure provides for membership from the two organizations. That's under way and it was approved approximately two to three weeks ago and they've been meeting since then. It took a long time to get to that point, many months and years of discussion.

The second merger involves Windsor Western and the Metropolitan General Hospital. Both organizations have committed to the merger concept. They feel very strongly that it's in the best interests of their community and they feel that the public interests would best be served if they merged.

They are going through discussions right now about what merger means in terms of governance, bylaw and operating a corporate structure, so they're not as far along as the Grace-Dieu alliance. But, based on the information I have, they're continuing to move in the right direction.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** In bringing me up to date here, you've ruled out the concerns that were expressed in that letter that I was referring to of an overall governance structure that would be costly and—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It was never part of the plan.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** When six people sign a letter, I don't say it was never part of the plan. I don't assume they're crazy, Minister, and they make these things up.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** They hadn't seen the reconfiguration report and they hadn't heard the response of the ministry to the recommendations when that letter was signed. I think the fears that were raised, as so often happens, were being raised unnecessarily and I hope the answers you've had will allay those who still share them.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I want to move on to dental hygienists and dentists. Minister, we had an opportunity to speak briefly about this issue a couple of weeks ago in the Legislature. So that all members know, dental hygienists have been expressing some concern recently that with some of the content of the RHPA, because they're under order of a dentist, that may affect some of their ability to treat patients under the guise of the public health sector, and there's a bit of a controversy brewing there.

I just want to clarify really for the record, you indicated to me that when the rumour was circulating that Allen Burrows was drafting amendments to the RHPA to deal with this issue, that rumour wasn't true and you were taking steps to ensure that all parties concerned were aware of what the ministry's intentions were and that your intentions weren't to open up the RHPA during this term of office. Could you just comment on that for the record?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Yes, I'd like to, because I don't know whether you heard Mrs Sullivan's question. I have certainly assured her that I understood agreement had been reached with the college and that there had been some understanding that a general order could be issued and that some of the worries of the dental hygienists had been allayed. She said this afternoon that her information was that this was in fact not correct, and I've undertaken to get back to her on Tuesday with the most up-to-date information.

Jodey Porter, who's the assistant deputy minister who dealt with the Regulated Health Professions Act, is here, and I think, seeing that the issue has been raised again, if she could shed any additional light or give some background and explanation to this issue, that might be helpful.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Could I just say, I listened carefully to your response to Ms Sullivan's question about this. You weren't as clear in your response today as you were to me in our private conversation, so I'm giving you the opportunity to clarify this. If the government is saying it's not going to open up RHPA within this term of office, then that's something that should be stated for the record.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** That was what I had stated on the record here a couple of days ago, that I did not see at this point opening up the RHPA, certainly in this session, perhaps not in the next one, that as we learned how to deal with the RHPA and as the professions became more familiar with it, there might well be a package of changes required to be made at some future date, but that I thought it would be inappropriate to—every time an issue is identified, then we'd have to go through legislation again.

I think we have to live with the legislation for a while, understand what mechanisms we have to deal with some of the issues that arrive, and if it comes to the point where additional legislation is required, obviously we would look at that, but I'm not sure we're there yet. Perhaps Ms Porter can expand on that.

**The Chair:** Ms Porter, you've been suitably introduced for Hansard purposes. Please respond.

**Ms Jodey Porter:** If I could just get some guidance from you, Minister, and from the Chair, is it your wish that I also deal with Ms Sullivan's questions?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think if you can—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** No, please just give us the status of this particular one.

**The Chair:** Could I just say that I really try and do this in an informal way because I think it's very helpful, but there are certain rules we have to follow. I think if you direct your response to Mr Wilson's questions, he is actually asking you questions through the Chair. An opportunity will occur for Ms Sullivan either today or another day, or you can get back to her separately. This is Mr Wilson's half-hour of time and he has the responsibility to order it up as he sees fit. If he wants to yield more time, that's fine.

**Ms Porter:** Basically, we feel what is happening is that we have been approached on a number of fronts by various colleges and various professional groups in terms of conflicts relative to scope of practice across a broad range of issues. The dental hygienist issue and the optometry-ophthalmology issue are two in a long series of conflicts, in terms of health policy as it is presented, that we need to resolve in terms of relative scope of practice.

The ministry indeed, and Mr Burrows, is not drafting amendments or drafting legislation at this time. What we have undertaken to do and what we have done formally and publicly is send out letters, as of the middle of March, to all the involved stakeholder groups, including both colleges directly involved as well as the Ontario Dental Association and other stakeholders, to say that we were receiving briefs and submissions on the issue of scope of practice for dental hygienists, that we did undertake to begin and launch a public consultation process.

We had a consultation including the stakeholders on May 25. At that time the Royal College of Dental Surgeons, although they had submitted a brief to us, in fact decided not to formally introduce the brief through a public consultation process. They did comment that they disagreed at that stage with a ministry process and preferred an HPRAC-driven process to ensue.

At this stage we are still in the consultation mode, listening to both colleges, receiving information, and frankly will not be ready to take recommendations to the minister for some weeks.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I'm well aware of the Royal College's desire to send this to HPRAC, and I'm a little dismayed that it wasn't sent to HPRAC by this point. That's still an option available, is it?

**Ms Porter:** It's our understanding in terms of RHPA that the minister does have broad discretionary powers in terms of referral, depending on the level of public interest, the level of health protection and considerations in terms of relevance of a review process, between an arm's length body like HPRAC, which is far more of a Solomon and out there to deal with quite complex public policy issues as well as health policy issues, and frankly what can be reviewed and analysed by a ministry bureau-



cracy that has been in this business for just over a decade. Those discretionary powers are there, and we have followed this route on this occasion.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Chairman, while Ms Porter is with us, I'll ask the minister—perhaps Ms Porter would like to comment on it, though—you did mention the issue also that surfaced with respect to optometrists and the prescribed diseases list issue. Do you want to let us know where that is and where the ministry's heading? It's another matter that I know there's been a request that it be sent to HPRAC.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Yes, I'm well aware of that, and it is under active advisement.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** What exactly would that mean? I have a letter, for the record here, from Dr Peter Rozanec that I think was sent to all members of provincial Parliament, dated May 30. He is an optometrist from Port Credit. I also have a letter from Dr Mira Acs, who's president of the Ontario Association of Optometrists. Other than being under active consideration, surely to goodness, Minister, you have more to say than that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** What that indicates is that I'm well aware of the issue, have certainly received correspondence on it and at this point it is still under consideration whether or not it be referred to HPRAC and, if so, what form the recommendation would take.

My deputy tells me that in fact a referral has been made. I didn't know whether it had in fact gone out. I was being coy, because I knew I had made the decision to do that and wasn't sure whether in fact HPRAC had been informed and whether the letter had gone. Let me then be very clear—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I'm glad we have these sessions, Minister, to bring you up to speed on your own decisions. It's very helpful.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** What happens—let me explain—and I do find it discombobulating on occasion, is that the time between a decision being made by the minister and the paperwork being done and the letter being signed and transmitted is sometimes at least a week. So I go out and tell people I've made a decision and they have not been formally advised and then everybody gets very upset with me and with the officials. I try not to allow that to happen—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Your life history's very interesting, but—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** —because I have some excellent officials who serve me very well. I've asked them to give me the date when they expect they might have an interim report but, in any case, I have asked them to give me their advice by December 31, 1994, so that is under way. 1710

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I am requesting a list of all matters that have been referred to HRPAC and their status. Is that something that's easily enough done by the ministry?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Very easily.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Okay. Because I think it's quite important. As everyone is aware I think, there are a

number of issues brewing, and it would be very helpful to have a sort of list we can refer to on what actually is at the advisory committee and what isn't.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me just say that the number of regulations under RHPA was phenomenal. I think there were 120 regulations. The branch of the ministry prepared those regulations and had them through leg and regs committee of cabinet and cabinet and with HPRAC's advice on a number of them in a period of three months. It was an extraordinary amount of work, and I think put a real burden on HPRAC, so that while all of that was happening they were not asked to advise me on other issues.

It has been since the proclamation of RHPA and the template regulations were in place that they have been free to advise on more general matters and of course the issue of the incorporation of physicians, which was referred to them as part of our agreement with the OMA and was another major piece of work that we asked them to do very quickly. So they have had their hands full, and we are now looking at some other referrals to them such as the one under the Optometry Act that I just referred to.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, will it be possible to get a copy of the letter regarding the optometry matter that you've indicated you've sent or are sending?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I will certainly bring an update on the status of referrals and the nature of those to the committee.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** The letter was addressed to all MPPs so I assume that you would have responded to that May 30 letter.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** So you knew I'd sent it when I didn't know I'd sent it.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I had a pretty good idea you'd sent it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I see. Okay. That's the kind of critic I am familiar with.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** It took 10 minutes of my time to get you to realize that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If you'd just been up front and said, "I have here the letter that you've sent to HPRAC," you might have saved us all 10 minutes.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I don't have 100% confidence in my sources, Minister, so I take these things with caution.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If it's signed by me, it's a pretty good source.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mr Rochon did provide me yesterday, pursuant to my request, a list of capital projects, their status and what will be paid out in 1994-95. I was wondering, Minister, I'd just like to ask a specific update in writing from the ministry on the Simcoe county hospital redevelopment projects, the status of those projects. I now have the dollar figures that are to flow in this fiscal year, but I would like a brief paragraph on the status of each of those projects if that's possible.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd be more than happy to ask my deputy to do that.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I know my colleague Mr David Tilson from Orangeville is very much wondering about



the status of the new hospital in Dufferin county. There are many, many others, but those are the ones that I would ask for at this time.

**Mrs Mottershead:** There certainly is an indication here on pages 2 and 3 for the three hospitals that you were concerned about, and there's some cash flow indicated that I think is positive reinforcement of the government's intention to proceed.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I agree, Deputy, to the extent that I guess the cash flow is a relatively small amount of dollars compared to total project cost and most of it is study money. You can't reiterate often enough the fact that these promises for the hospitals—I've just mentioned Dufferin and Simcoe—go back almost a decade, over three governments now, so the communities are getting pretty tired of studying these issues to death.

I just want to move along to—where did the minister go?

**The Chair:** Proceed with your question.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Perhaps I'll skip what I was just going to do and ask the deputy to provide the total cost of the consent-to-treatment legislation, its implementation to date. I notice in the estimates books that there are line items for that specific piece of legislation. It's an incredible amount of money, as it appears in different places throughout the estimates book, and I'd like to know what the total cost is and what the status of the implementation of the legislation is. Do you have any comment on that now, Deputy?

**Mrs Mottershead:** I can let the member know that we are working on the implementation together with two other ministries, in particular the Ministry of the Attorney General and the public trustee's wing of that particular organization. We are moving ahead. We are preparing some public information material over the next two months, which will be available, that describes the issue of substitute decision-making, as well as the kind of tool that we're trying to find to make sure there is consistency in how the decisions are made.

Work is progressing. It appears like it's a large amount of money when you look at the estimates in the book, but a lot of it is for purposes of education and information. We're hoping, through the medicine and law institute, to put on a few educational sessions so that people understand all three pieces of legislation and know how to proceed when faced with that kind of situation.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Our Consent to Treatment Act is specifically Ministry of Health. I'm wondering if you can provide the same type of information or get it from the other lead ministries for the Advocacy Act and the status of the Advocacy Commission. Is that possible for you?

**Mrs Mottershead:** That's certainly possible.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Because the public sees these bills very much together.

**Mrs Mottershead:** I'm sure if one looked at the estimates of the other two ministries, you definitely would see there is government commitment in the form of additional dollars provided for the Advocacy Commission, and certainly in the Attorney General's ministry in terms of substitute decision-making. I'm sure that infor-

mation is probably in here. If it's not available in here, then we can undertake to ask those two ministries to provide that and put it together with ours in terms of a plan for the expenditure.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** As you know, yes, there are some figures available for advocacy in the estimates book. However, again, it doesn't give you any status report on the implementation of that legislation. I don't know if your ministry can find it or not. If you can, I'd appreciate it.

**Mrs Mottershead:** We can certainly do a general note that covers the status of those three initiatives and where they are, because you will see a lot of activity over the next couple of months in terms of public education—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Don't rush.

**Mrs Mottershead:** —in preparation for proclamation later on in the year or early next year.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I also want to ask, and I might as well ask the deputy this since the minister isn't here at the moment—oh, here she comes. It's very difficult to obtain from estimates exactly how many people work for the Ministry of Health. I would be quite interested to know the actual employee numbers both in the minister's office and in all the branches of the ministry over the past 10 years, if that can be provided.

**Mrs Mottershead:** Ten years?

**The Chair:** It certainly wouldn't be ready by 6 o'clock.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I actually asked for it last year and the year before and I never did get it.

**The Chair:** First of all, let me just indicate that from the current estimates book, it's an obligation for the minister to bring those numbers forward within the time frame of the estimates. That's clear. However, the amount of work that goes into that, it would have to be treated much like an order paper question and they would undertake to get back to us with it. Certainly if you're formally requesting that breakdown, that can be ready by next Tuesday, because it's an immediate matter from the current estimates.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Mrs Sullivan makes a very good point. The availability of employee numbers, person-years, used to be quite easy to find in the budgets, for example, and in the last few years it seems to me these things have dropped right out. We have dollar figures.

**Mrs Mottershead:** You have that information in the budget. It does talk to the number of government employees and it does break it down by ministry. It is in the Ontario budget. It gives you the phone number. I think the Treasurer in that budget also indicated very specifically the number of positions that have been eliminated through attrition and the plan for next year. There is a number, an OPS-wide number, as well as ministry-specific.

1720

In addition, that information is available through the Management Board Secretariat, and when those estimates come up they have the aggregate number and the individual ministry number. We do have a ministry number. It

would be very difficult, I must say, to pull that information over the past 10 years, given that there have been about half a dozen or more reorganizations and realignments and all of that kind of stuff. We wouldn't be preparing branch to branch, and what was then isn't necessarily what is now. However, we'd be pleased to provide current as well as last year so that at least you have a couple of years of information.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The addition of long-term care from Comsoc was one example of the kinds of shifts that have occurred, I'm sure, over the last 10 years in a number of directions.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Let's leave it this way: provide whatever you can as quickly as you can. I'll let you off the hook on that.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** A lot of people and they all work very hard.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, you wouldn't want me to quote Hansard from the past, when you were on the other side of the fence.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was never Health critic.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** No, but you were a pretty good critic in a number of other areas as I recall.

I want to raise the issue that was raised again by Mike Harris in the House this afternoon, and that is out-of-country payments or the out-of-country policy. I should say, to begin with, that I think you had agreement of the parties in the Legislature when, I guess it was last year, the government moved forward to cap the out-of-country payments at \$400 a day. However, it's no secret that there's quite a controversy now with respect to the further move that your ministry has made, and that is to the \$100 a day and \$50 a day.

I ask you on what basis you do that, given the oft-quoted section of the Canada Health Act. It seems very clear to me and to the snowbird association and to other parliamentarians that you are against the Canada Health Act. Do you have a legal opinion to suggest that you're not against the Canada Health Act?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me address this, because I think I certainly understand the concern that the snowbirds have and I think the answer the Treasurer gave in the House today covered the issue, but let me try again.

The Canada Health Act is federal legislation and the decision as to how it should be interpreted lies with the federal government. It has over the years been interpreted in different ways in different provinces, and in some cases the federal government has expressed an opinion about a particular interpretation or activity by a province. In others they have not.

As I'm sure the member knows, we looked very carefully at our budget this year as to how we could in fact constrain the increase in costs in health care that had occurred through the 1980s and at the same time provide the opportunities for more efficient management and operation of the system and expansion of the system in those areas where there were growing pressures and needs, whether those be long-term care, cancer treatment, dialysis, which is close to the member's heart, or other programs.

I think we've done that very successfully and I'm very proud of some of the innovations we've been able to put forward, but to do that we had to look at everything we were doing and say, "Can we make some changes there that enable us to save some money?"

When I made the choice as to where I could save some funding, to save some money by looking at those services that we paid for in foreign countries for which the beneficiaries already had insurance—because the \$400 a day that we paid to hospitals out-of-country, certainly if it was the United States, didn't cover the actual cost of a hospital bed—certainly not the hospital bed in parts of the US—and was not in many cases the equivalent of a hospital bed in parts of Ontario. It went some way towards making that, but it meant that individuals already had to have insurance if they were to safely leave Ontario.

As we looked, as I say, at places where we could make some savings in our health care budget, the imposition of a small, additional responsibility on those Ontarians who leave the province and who buy insurance by way of an additional cost for their premiums, seemed to me to be an appropriate tradeoff for some of the other significant changes that we had contemplated, such as copayments on the Ontario drug benefit plan, a plan which isn't covered or relevant at all to the Canada Health Act and where we are the only province that provides 100% of funding.

I made the decision that we would make some cuts in out-of-country payments. When we looked at the pattern across the country, we found that there were other provinces that were paying much less than Ontario had been paying and that there had been no indication that this was in violation of the Canada Health Act.

Let me also remind the member of the fact that because of inconsistencies, of which this is only one, in interpretations of the Canada Health Act by provinces, the deputy ministers established a task force last November to begin to work together to identify inconsistencies and to see if a consensus could be reached as to what in fact those general principles in the Canada Health Act meant in a number of areas.

As I have stated before, and let me say again on the record, if it is determined by all of my colleagues and the federal minister that there is a consistent interpretation of the Canada Health Act with respect to out-of-country payments, then Ontario will conform to that. It is not our intention to violate the Canada Health Act. In fact we are one of the strongest proponents of the Canada Health Act at federal-provincial meetings.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, when you moved to limit the payments to \$400 per day for hospital stays out of country, that had a significant effect on insurance premiums, particularly that seniors were paying. But when you moved then again to limit to \$100 a day, that had a catastrophic effect—not a small imposition, as you're indicating—to the point now where it's difficult for me to believe that you're going to save \$21 million with this initiative when many of those seniors simply won't be going out of country or going south for the winter.

If they're going to have a heart attack down south or



would have had one had they been down there or whatever and had to have been hospitalized, they're now going to be home and the same thing; you're going to get sick whenever God deems you're going to get sick. I don't see how you're going to save \$21 million.

So you tell me what studies you have to show, or any proof you have, that you're going to save the \$21 million that's contained in the estimates book, given that a vast number of those seniors are telling us now that they won't be leaving the country and that actually your initiative is an insult to them, because it's almost as if you were saying, "Well, these people go down south to get sick," and of course that isn't the case. You tell me how you back up this \$21-million figure.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Of course we don't believe that people go down south to get sick, and we believe that everybody leaving the country for any period of time for whatever reason ought to have insurance, and the vast majority do.

I don't accept your contention that in fact this is going to have a catastrophic impact on premium increases. Our understanding from discussions with insurers is that it would be in the range of a 10% to 15% increase in premiums.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** But that's in addition to the premium hikes last year.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** The premiums vary depending on age, depending on length of stay.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** They always have, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** If you look at them, you will find that in fact the vast majority of people leave for a month, 30 days, or less, and the premiums jump quite a lot if you're staying longer than that. For a stay of less than a month, which is the vast majority of people who travel south, if south is what we're talking about, or to other parts of the world, the premiums are not excessive and will not, I believe, increase enormously as a result of this change.

The saving comes as a result of looking at what was spent in out-of-country payments last year, which was \$73 million, and estimating from that the proportion of it that was spent on hospital costs.

Let me remind you that we continue to pay Ontario rates for physician services out of country. The hospital bed is often a smaller component of in fact the total cost to the consumer of out-of-country coverage, so I don't believe that it will have a catastrophic effect.

There is no mechanism or data that indicates whether in fact people who go south make any less use of the health care system than people who don't. I think the vast majority of people who are accustomed to going south make their decision as to whether or not to go on a number of factors, but primarily the exchange rate has far more impact on their decision whether or not to go and for how long to go than does this change in health insurance rates. I am fully confident that our savings will in fact be realized.

1730

**The Chair:** Minister, if I might interrupt you, Mr Wilson has agreed to yield one minute for me to ask you

a question on that point and, if I may, it has to do with the issue of the insurance regulation.

Given that auto insurance is regulated by your government and therefore rates can be set, that cannot be said about health insurance. Therefore, did you check with the insurers for health insurance in this province to obtain from them assurances in writing or any costing thereof for its impact on the very issue?

It is a clear distinction here, because the consumer is laid bare in this province as it relates to health care. Their automobile is protected by your government but their physical body is not in terms of acquiring affordable health insurance, and that distinction is clear. When this was raised with your predecessor, certain assurances were forthcoming before substantive moves like this were taken, and I wonder if you did a similar act this time around.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No, I don't have written assurances or opinions from the insurance companies. Certainly our understanding in our discussions with them was that this would not have a major impact on rates, and I have no evidence from the costings or, again, the reports I have had that in fact there has been the kind of catastrophic increase in rates.

Believe it or not, Mr Chair, I believe the market responds very quickly to these kinds of changes. For example, with respect to our change in eligibility, when we made the change to students' eligibility for OHIP, there were many students who said, "We can't get insurance." The market has responded and there is now insurance available for foreign students studying in this province.

As health insurance and basic insurance is provided without the payment of any premium by residents of Ontario, I think for those people who do choose to voluntarily put themselves in a position where they need to buy insurance, they will shop around and make agreements, as snowbird associations have, to get the best possible insurance.

Let me make two more points on this issue. We have to maintain the health care system here in this province for those people, should they return or should they decide not to go south or out of country in a following year, and very many people who end up in a hospital in a foreign country as a result of an emergency when they are on vacation or travelling on business have as their first preference being returned to Ontario for health care. That has always happened. That will continue to happen. I think it happens because the insurance companies want to get them back, because they don't want to pay the costs.

We have a lot of anecdotal evidence of hospitals in the US extending stays or seeking to do procedures at exorbitant costs because they know people have in fact Ontario insurance. So the insurers themselves see a great advantage in bringing people home as quickly as possible, and it's my responsibility to make sure that those facilities are here for people who don't choose to go south for a holiday and for those people who need the facilities when they return.

Are we adjourning for a vote?



**The Chair:** No. We are called to the House for a vote with about 27 minutes before we're called to actually vote. I'm in the hands of the committee. If you wish to adjourn and reconvene next Tuesday, we have almost two hours and six minutes remaining. So we can adjourn now, if you wish, or we can take 20 minutes. I'm really asking the government members what they'd like to do.

**Mr Fletcher:** If we hadn't allowed 45 minutes for one party, we would have had time for other things, but I think it's a good idea to adjourn till Tuesday.

**The Chair:** If you'd like to debate the time allocation, Mr Fletcher—

**Mr Fletcher:** I don't want to debate anything with you at this point in the meeting.

**The Chair:** —it's your time you're debating it on at the moment.

**Mr Fletcher:** No, it isn't, because you're asking for direction, and that's what we said, why not adjourn?

**The Chair:** Then answer the question I asked you, Mr Fletcher.

**Mr O'Connor:** We'll probably have time for one more rotation Tuesday. Is this what you're suggesting?

**The Chair:** You have two hours left on Tuesday, and we'll continue the rotation and the time allocation.

**Mr O'Connor:** Okay. I think we've done a rotation here. When we come back it'll be our rotation. Sounds fair.

**The Chair:** Fine. I have some committee business, but this does not come off the minister's time. I have to

get a motion from the committee. My options were to do it at the beginning or at the end, and I chose to do it at the end, so I didn't hold the staff here in case there's a debate.

If that's the pleasure, we're adjourning the estimates portion of this committee meeting at this time but we are continuing with another item before the committee. If that's understood, then thank you, Minister. We will reconvene Health estimates next Tuesday.

The subcommittee met prior to the commencement of the estimates today, and the subcommittee met to examine the problem that we will not be able to complete even a small portion of our estimates because of the late start and because we have chosen not to sit till midnight for this two-week period.

The subcommittee has a motion to present to this committee that the Chair request, through the House leaders, a full week in the preferred month of September to complete the third—

**Mr O'Connor:** The preferred month of September?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, in the month of September, thank you—to complete the balance of the estimates of the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Northern Development and Mines and hopefully as well Management Board Secretariat. Is there any discussion on that motion?

All those in favour? Opposed, if any? That's carried.

This meeting stands adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1738.



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*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

O'Connor, Larry (Durham-York ND) for Mr Abel  
Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L) for Mr Ramsay  
Wessenger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Hayes  
Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Arnott

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Naylor, Dr David, chief executive officer, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** McLellan, Ray, research officer, Legislative Research Service



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ISSN 1181-6465

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 35th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 21 June 1994

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 21 juin 1994

Standing committee on  
estimates

Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses

Ministry of Health

Ministère de la Santé



Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 21 June 1994

Mardi 21 juin 1994

The committee met at 1603 in committee room 2.  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** We are doing the estimates of the Ministry of Health. I turn now to the Liberal caucus for questions to the minister.

**Mr Hugh O'Neil (Quinte):** First of all, it's a pleasure to be here today and nice to have the minister with us. We've had a little excitement over the last short while. I want to thank the minister for the cooperation and help that I received from her and her staff last week when we had a very large delegation up from the Quinte area and especially the Trenton Memorial Hospital.

I believe, as I have mentioned to her in the past, that all the rationalization going on throughout Ontario has caused some concern not only in my own riding but in other ridings. Having a new district health council handling the Hastings and Prince Edward area, with a new executive director, has placed some real problems on their backs trying to come up with a type of rationalization program and something that will keep everyone in the area happy and content. We're dealing in this case with the Belleville, the Trenton, the Picton hospitals, which Mr Johnson is concerned with, and also with the hospital in Bancroft where Mr Buchanan is.

I guess it will prove to be an ongoing discussion, but I hope that after our meeting last week with the minister and the question in the House and the delegation we had up from the Quinte area the minister understands that—the process likely has to be gone through—the people in that area are very concerned with the delays they've had over the last three or four years and the cost associated with hiring of different consultants and then going back.

It's my feeling that, although we say the work is going to be carried out by the district health council, the ministry staff are certainly doing some of the directing there. I'm always a little worried that they're doing maybe more directing than they need to and not leaving as many of these decisions up to the district health council. But trying again to be fair, it may be that they have a certain direction they want things to take.

It would sometimes make the process much easier if the ministry staff were to say from the outset to the district health council, "This is the direction we want to go; this is where we want to end up or close to that," and let the people in the district health council and the people in the area know what that direction is without delaying it as long as it has and going through the cost of consultants and everything else.

There have been additional meetings since last week.

There was one last Wednesday evening in Belleville at Loyalist College where the presentations were made. That now has been put out to the public and the public are to get back to the district health council at some time within the next couple of months. Hopefully decisions can be arrived at by the hospital boards, by the different medical staffs and by the public in general that, if that decision is reached, we will have a quick decision by the minister and the ministry so we can get this thing on the road.

I've expressed some time in the past, pertaining to the Trenton hospital, I have some real safety concerns as to the position of that hospital: electrical, heating and some other issues that I think have been brought to the government's attention. Hopefully something will happen there.

I know there was a question today by our leader, Lyn McLeod, on cancer coverage. I wonder if the minister could comment. A lot of the work, the cancer operations that are done in our area, in the Belleville-Trenton area, are done at the Kingston hospital. I wonder if the minister could bring us up to date on what's happening lately in Kingston as far as trying to keep up with the workload and the examinations and things like that pertaining to cancer treatment are concerned.

**Hon Ruth Grier (Minister of Health):** There are two questions there. Let me respond to the first one and then perhaps—I don't know whether there are some specific details about Kingston—some of the ministry officials who are here can respond to that one.

I wanted to say to the member, whom I know has taken a very deep and close interest in the hospital restructuring and the work of the district health council in his area, that I fully understand how difficult it is for communities when changes are suggested in the institutions from which they have traditionally received excellent care. As somebody who has vacationed in eastern Ontario, I know from personal experience some of the excellence of care and the caring care that the hospitals in his area provide. I understand the community's fear of somehow losing that as change occurs.

But I think it's important for all of us to acknowledge and to help people to understand that the health care system is changing, and those changes have been under way for quite some time. We know the figures about the fact that there are reduced lengths of stay because of improved ways of doing things and new procedures and new technology. We know that people get better health care if they are helped to be up and about and ambulatory earlier than they used to be decades ago.



We know that returning people to their own homes and familiar surroundings keeps them healthier, so in response to that hospitals have changed. The objectives of the change are to improve the system to make sure that people get the kind of health care that they want and that they get better health care. People always see it as somehow damaging the system when there are changes to hospitals, but in fact the overall objective is to improve the system and to improve system management and at the same time improve the quality of care.

We also have to, in difficult financial times, see what we can do to reduce duplication. If there are two hospitals in the same city providing the same services, as I've heard from physicians, they sometimes spend as much time parking their cars and getting to the bedside as they do at the actual bedside if they have patients in more than one hospital. We have to become more efficient and we also have to support the change from inpatient to outpatient care and provide from the savings in institutions the dollars to do that. We also have to be concerned about the people who work in the system.

I appreciate the sense that the member has expressed to me before, and again today, that there need to be some clear expectations from the ministry as to what the district health councils are to do. I'm very proud of the fact that in Ontario a lot of the restructuring planning, in fact all of it, is happening at the local level through collaborative planning. Again in collaboration with the Ontario Hospital Association, we have, through joint work with the joint policy and planning committee, enunciated very clear principles for hospital restructuring.

When the member says that the ministry knows what it wants to happen, we know the principles that we believe the district health councils have to follow. The outcome will vary depending on the date and depending on the communities, and those principles which were shared with hospitals earlier this year are very clear: that the client and the needs of the client and the needs of the community have got to be the focus of it all; that there has to be integration of service delivery, both between institutions and from institutions to community-based services; that we have to enhance the quality of care and examine very carefully what that quality of care should be; that there needs to be education and research as part of the plan, and an integration of both the clinical and the non-clinical data, because the collection of data and the analysis of data by the district health council and by the consultants of the district health council have got to be balanced by the view, the history, the culture of the community. I think it's that meshing that is best done at the local level by the district health councils. We have asked for rather extraordinary voluntary efforts by the district health councils to do that.

I certainly share the member's concern that when that work is done and when those consultations are over, there will be quick turnaround from the ministry. I can give to him my commitment that will happen.

I'm delighted that, as a result of the study that was released with respect to the Trenton and Belleville hospitals, there now have been initiated a number of meetings with citizens. I gather the turnout has been

large, which is evidence of the interest that his constituents show in the process.

The preliminary results of the studies indicate that there are opportunities for restructuring. What precisely those will be and how they will play out will be dependent on what is heard at those meetings. I hope that both the district health council and the hospital and, I know the member will share with the people of that area both the information that helps them to have confidence that they will end up with a better system and as many opportunities for participation as possible.

**Mr O'Neil:** I appreciate those comments. I talked to the people in Belleville and had a discussion on whether they have the same concerns or not. I haven't heard as much from them as I have from the Trenton people. But I think—and this would be more for your ministry staff, along with yourself—in the case of the Trenton hospital, that particular hospital has been working very hard for the last, I would say, eight or 10 years trying to follow the directives that were set out by our government and your government to cut back on the amount of time in stay and cutting back on the number of beds.

It has become, along with the other hospitals in our area, a very efficient hospital. They are maybe not given the consideration they deserve in cutting costs over a large number of years. On a comparison basis, I think they stand likely the highest in the province of Ontario.

I appreciate you saying that you will try to speed up as soon as the study results come in from the district health council, the process so that we can get ahead with some of the capital costs and other things that need to be done in the riding.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me make two points in response to that. Certainly in those areas where there is health and safety or problems that need to be addressed, we have developed, again in conjunction with the Ontario Hospital Association, guidelines that would enable the kind of essential capital work to continue, despite the fact that long-term planning and restructuring is occurring.

The other point I have to make is that while hospitals have over the last seven or eight years become more and more efficient, in many cases they have done that on their own voluntary efforts, but also in isolation from the rest of the system. As a hospital cuts the length of time that people stay there, we have to look at, are there developing in the community the services that are required to support people when they are released from hospital earlier than they might have been?

That's what the restructuring exercise is about, not just how efficient a hospital can get but how we can develop a whole system. That's what I mean when I say that people get better care as a result of restructuring than they would if the directive from the government was, as some parties would have it, merely "cut costs." What we're saying is we know the changes are occurring. We have to balance those changes by investing in other parts of the system, what kind of an overall plan we should have in order to enable that to happen.

Let me turn to the second part of the member's question, which was with respect to cancer care and

particularly to Kingston. I'm not sure that I have specific data about Kingston, but I can certainly say to the member that the cancer strategy I released in April, the first time this province has had a cancer strategy, is all about creating improvements to services, particularly to support services.

I was pleased to be able to announce in addition an extra \$15 million of investment in enhanced treatment services so that we could cut down on waiting lists and meet the needs that unfortunately are growing for cancer treatment. As part of that \$15 million, there was \$8 million for bone marrow transplants, \$3 million for breast cancer screening and \$4 million for additional treatment in Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston.

While I don't have with me the actual time frames when that will be invested and when we will see practical results from that, I can assure him that we understand the need and are very appreciative of the work being done in Kingston and have allocated some funding to that.

**Mr O'Neil:** Again, I don't want to sound too complimentary, but I will say too that—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It's okay. You're allowed.

**Mr O'Neil:** It wasn't to you, Minister; it was to the Kingston hospitals.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Oh, I see. Shucks.

**Mr O'Neil:** Partially, anyway. Just to say that each of us as members has people from within our areas where there's always a crisis situation or felt to be a crisis situation. When it comes to cancer, it is a crisis situation, where they have come. I will say that on any problems where we've had to do referrals from the area hospitals to the Kingston area, the staff there have always been very helpful and they're always very willing to help.

Another area I wanted to touch on, which has to do with our area—I know that it deals with a different philosophy between governments—has to do with the subject of nursing homes. I think as members, we are into nursing homes on a continual basis, whether it's visiting personal friends or attending birthdays or anniversaries or whatever it may be. I like to feel that in the Quinte area, we have excellent nursing homes that give excellent care to the residents who are there.

The nursing home people in general are quite upset with the direction this government is taking, where people in private business or private industry are more or less being told that over a number of years governments will control nursing homes and they will not be a private business. Is that not the direction things are going in?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I think that's overstating the direction. Certainly our government has indicated our preference for not-for-profit delivery of health care, as the Canada Health Act calls for. As we integrate long-term care more and more into the health care system, as opposed to being a social service, it is critically important that we conform to the principles of the Canada Health Act and have that health care delivered, as our hospitals and other institutions are, on a not-for-profit basis. We have indicated that as we move to expand our long-term care system, both in the community-based services and in institutions, that expansion should occur in not-for-profit.

We have wrestled with the difficulties of making the transition from a system where there was a great deal of unevenness—some people in nursing homes or homes for the aged paid \$26 a day and some people paid up to \$92 a day and there was not a consistent level of care or in fact a requirement for consistency in care, depending on the need.

**1620**

In the transition from that very fragmented and diverse system to a system based on people's needs and on some consistent evaluation of their requirements, we have invested a great deal in the private sector, in nursing homes, more, quite frankly, than I would like to have done, because of the pleas that we got from private sector nursing homes that during this period of transition they would be put at risk as business enterprises.

We have assisted in both funding that helps them with the maintenance of their properties through taxes and acknowledgement of mortgages and the costs that they have incurred over the years as well as maintaining the funding for personal care and services. I don't think, with all due respect, that the private nursing homes should have very many complaints against us, because the recognition of the need for assistance during the transition period has, as I say, I believe been very generous.

What we are going towards, though, is a system where the payments to the institutions are based on the needs of the clients. It used to be you were paid per bed, regardless of the needs of the person occupying that bed. Through the case-mix index and the evaluation that we began last year and continued into the future, we will get to the point where a home that has clients who need very little nursing care is paid by the taxpayers commensurate with the needs of the patients, and a home that has a lot more fragile and vulnerable people who need a great deal more nursing care is paid depending on the needs of those people. The extra funding that we've provided is to help homes make that transition.

**Mr O'Neil:** Again, I guess I'm a believer in somebody in private business running things rather than the government. It seems that once we get the government involved too heavily in the running of not only nursing homes, what you'll actually find over the years and as time goes on is that your cost will become higher than what it was when it was run by private industry.

It may be that there are examples both ways. Maybe there have been exorbitant profits made in some places, but I really do believe, Minister, that on the road you're heading down, as time goes on, in the future years you will find when you get government—and I'm not going to say "government regulation," because there's no doubt there were some changes that needed to be done in some of the nursing homes and some changes that have been made over the last 10 or 15 years that have been good ones. You could end up with a system that is government-run and it's going to be a lot more expensive than when you have somebody who has to cut costs and makes a profit, and I'm not saying cutting costs in safety or treatment but in other areas. Sometimes government gets carried away.

That brings me to another subject. I know that when



you're talking public versus private—and we've had quite a discussion going on at the Belleville General Hospital on home care, where at one time home care was handled by one agency and now it's handled by three or four. Are you familiar with the subject at Belleville hospital?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was aware that the Belleville hospital delivered home care and was not entirely in favour of some of the proposals of our long-term care expansion and redirection.

**Mr O'Neil:** I understand they have written to you talking about the costs—I forget whether it was \$600,000 or \$800,000—that had been saved by the hospital by putting it out to private agencies rather than having public agencies. Whether I want to get in that discussion or not, I just wondered whether you have received those letters and what your comments might be on those large savings they have made by putting it out to tender.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me say, yes, I am certainly aware of their correspondence and of their concerns, but let me go back to your earlier question—

**Mr O'Neil:** I guess too that they've said they are refusing the request you have made to make it totally public rather than private agencies.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to that by replying generally and in response to your first question, which is that it's all very well for the private sector to say, "Let us do it," but we, the taxpayers, are paying for it. We are putting hundreds of millions of dollars into these private institutions and there's another balance of accountability.

We've had a great deal in the House these last couple of weeks about government funding going to non-profit, community-based agencies and the need for the government to be accountable. I think that holds true in spades when you're giving taxpayers' money to a private agency to provide a service. I suspect the member and certainly all parties would be the first to be critical if we just wrote the cheques and didn't have any accountability or standards or imposition of requirements.

**Mr O'Neil:** But in this case the Belleville hospital—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I was talking about nursing homes. Now let me get to the hospital. The hospital has been running home care, but again this expansion of long-term care and the changes we are making come from a number of initiatives. The first is the recognition by the previous government and our government of the increasing need there was going to be for long-term care in the future.

The number of people in the population aged 65 and over is going to increase by 45% between 1992 and the year 2010. If we don't plan now for a system that helps keep people out of institutions and provides home care in a most cost-effective way, we won't be able to afford the cost of those services 20 years from now.

**Mr O'Neil:** The two things are good care and at a reasonable cost.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** But what we heard from seniors was: "We want to have a part to play in managing our own care. We don't want it done for us and we don't want the decisions about the kind of care to be made by agencies, institutions or the ministry."

**Mr O'Neil:** Like a hospital board?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Like the hospital board. "We want locally based agencies that will be like Meals on Wheels, Red Cross, all of those agencies that we have known in the past where there are consumers on the board and which are dealing with an integrated and coordinated system of home care."

I understand fully the argument that the quality of care being provided now by some of the private providers is good, and I agree with that, but I think we also have to build a network of services that will take us into the future and respond to the needs of consumers.

However, the argument he has made and that Belleville has made is not unique to him and to Belleville. This whole process of expansion and reform of long-term care has been a listening and responding process by the ministry. We listened to those arguments and so in Bill 173, which I introduced into the House and which got second reading last week, we made a change in the requirement that not more than 10% of the services provided by multiservice agencies be to the for-profit sector. Bill 173 acknowledges that up to 20% of the services can be purchased. Whether that purchase is from a private sector provider or a not-for-profit provider will be the decision of the MSA.

I know that over the summer, when the standing committee on social development committee holds hearings on that legislation, this issue will be, I suspect, well addressed and well debated, and I look forward to those submissions.

**Mr O'Neil:** I guess that's where I would disagree with you. Whether it's given publicly or privately, I would look at the type of care that is given to make sure it is the best and I would also look at the cost. Sometimes public agencies out-cost what the private sector can do for it. I guess I am not against the private sector making a profit if their costs are within line or less and if they are giving the same or better service. I guess that's where our philosophies differ.

1630

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to that, because I certainly don't believe that a profit ought to be made out of the illness of our citizens. When I hear people extol the values of private sector health care, I ask them to look south of the border and to see whether any profit or efficiencies that might be achieved by hospitals in the US are worth the suffering and the pain and the costs in human injustice that a private sector system can provide.

**Mr O'Neil:** I guess that's where we differ, Minister. I have no problem if they're giving a good service and it's very competitive. I don't want to socialize everything or I don't want to make everything public. I believe that there is a place—and if you were to take your description of the health care system and apply it to industry and everything else, our province would be destroyed.

A couple of things: Again, the people in our area have worked very hard, the kidney dialysis community and also the people on the—I guess you don't call them CAT scans any more, you call them—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** CT scanners, MRIs sometimes.

**Mr O'Neil:** We have a new CAT scan in Belleville,



which I'm very pleased to have, and we have likely one of the most up-to-date dialysis centres in the city of Belleville also, which is really serving our people there. There are some concerns in the area, but there are also some very good things happening.

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I could go on for hours.

**The Vice-Chair:** But you don't have the time, Mr O'Neil. Thank you very much for your questions.

I now turn to the Conservative caucus. Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe West):** I was going to ask how much Ticzon gets there to time us on these things. He's telling me I only have a short few minutes and he's probably right.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** You're referring to my legislative assistant, Mr Ticzon, just for the record?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Yes. My question would be with respect to dialysis treatment. Minister, as you know, the social development committee is awaiting some further responses from your ministry on this crisis. I want to read to you a letter that I've received today from Dr David Mendelssohn, who is the staff nephrologist at the Toronto Hospital. He says:

"Dear Mr Wilson,

"I received today a copy of the letter of June 13, 1994, from Ruth Grier, Minister of Health, to Mr Charles Beer, MPP, Chair of the standing committee on social development. This letter details the minister's response to the two recommendations in the standing committee's report on dialysis treatment in Ontario.

"I am writing to tell you that I am shocked and saddened to see this non-committal response. The dialysis crisis which we have documented so carefully has grown in the past month or two to an unmanageable situation. The Toronto Hospital has now withdrawn from the city-wide emergency schedule, because it can no longer meet its commitments to its own patients. This withdrawal is for at least the month of July and probably for the entire summer. The two remaining hospitals, Wellesley and St Michael's, will try to meet the need, but it is anticipated that they will be swamped and will be quickly overwhelmed, leading to the complete disintegration of the emergency dialysis referral system.

"At the Toronto Hospital, the daily triaging of patients and postponement of treatments because of lack of availability of resources has impacted directly and negatively on patient care. Patients and families are very angry. Nurses are demoralized. Our teaching program is suffering because we are unable to accept interesting new cases, and instead of teaching about modern treatment with dialysis"—keeping in mind, Minister, this is a teaching hospital—"we are teaching about rationing and triaging. We are constantly forced to tell our students that this is what we would do if we had adequate resources, but this lousy compromise is what we do in Toronto in 1994. Eventually, an incorrect decision will be made and a patient will die because of postponement of dialysis. There is no legal defence for a physician if someone dies because resource constraints led to an incorrect triage decision. Personally, I am completely frustrated with the ongoing situation.

"You must also remember that if the funding announcement was made tomorrow, it would take two to three months before there can be any relief. It takes that long to hire and train nurses, especially in the summertime. The Toronto Dialysis Committee is now collecting information about which centres in Ontario are prepared to accept Toronto patients in transfer and we are making overtures to centres in northern New York state and to Detroit, Michigan, and Cleveland, Ohio.

"The nephrology community has remained relatively silent since the committee hearings concluded. Initially, we were promised by Mr Donald Walker that a funding announcement would be made shortly after the provincial budget in mid-May. Then, we were anticipating a major announcement to be made before June 17, which was the deadline imposed by the standing committee. Both of these deadlines have now passed and there is no funding announcement in sight.

"I can only conclude that the minister has chosen to disregard the input she has received from the Toronto nephrology community, and now also from the standing committee on social development.

"As always, if the nephrology community can help present our problems to anyone in government who is able to help, we are prepared to do so at any time.

"Thank you sincerely for your efforts on our behalf. I am disappointed that after all you have tried to do, I'm forced to write a letter such as this. It means all our efforts have been for naught."

Minister, I don't think you could ask for a stronger letter from a physician. It was unprompted by me; it just arrived in the fax machine about an hour ago, and it follows on a very serious situation that occurred today.

I had a frantic call from Dr Mendelssohn's colleague at Wellesley, Dr Janet Roscoe, yesterday evening. They're absolutely full in Toronto. Toronto Hospital's off the emergency roster now. There's no place to put dialysis patients. My patients in Alliston are being asked to stay there and try and find some other type of dialysis because there's no use coming to Toronto.

Last night, they were trying to transfer a patient to Kingston. Kingston can't take the patient. Luckily, just before question period or it would have been a subject of question period, this one patient, who's a 79-year-old man—and I'll give you a copy of—I think I have a letter.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I've certainly seen the correspondence.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** You've seen the correspondence. They did find some arrangements late this afternoon to put him into—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Arrangements were made to transfer him to Kingston, then a bed was found in Toronto. So the situation has been resolved.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** At St Michael's, that particular situation.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** At St Michael's.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** What if another patient comes on line in the next 24 hours, though? I mean, Toronto is full.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond, because I certainly

recognize Dr Mendelsohn's frustration. He is an outspoken advocate for his cause, and I appreciate that. We need that because this is an area of medicine where the increase in the number of cases is quite a shocking 10%, where our efforts at prevention are going to take some time to work through the system and where the reduction—I'm not sure where there has been a reduction, but certainly where we do not get enough organ transplants to deal with the needs in the way that best serves the needs of patients, which is to make those who are eligible or able to have a transplant to get one, and that puts extra pressure on the dialysis system.

But as the member well knows, because it has been the subject of a great deal of discussion both at committee and in the House, we have just completed a three-year, \$23-million expansion program for dialysis. I was pleased to be in Mississauga a few weeks ago to open a new haemodialysis service that keeps 18 patients able to do their own dialysis, which gives them a much better lifestyle than they would have if they were in an hospital bed.

The study that has been initiated and that the recommendations from the committee indicated ought to be integrated with other work being done by the Kidney Foundation is under way and is a study that the district health councils are doing in central Ontario to identify the needs and the different kinds of needs and how they can best be met for the next stage of expansion. We know this is a service that needs to be expanded.

I'm sorry that Dr Mendelsohn feels that the work that has been done in order to see whether or not there is a possibility of some interim solutions while we await the results of that study and the decisions on funding and expansion that I suspect will flow from that—as I say, I'm sorry the doctor doesn't feel that those have been leading to a conclusion. My information and the ministry officials' sense is that we in fact have had some very productive consultations with the hospitals in the region as to what kind of interim solutions would be and that we are at the stage of working out some final details that will enable us to address those issues in the short term.

I want to say that I'm fully aware of the need. I was aware of the emergency situation a few days ago when there was not a bed and when some extraordinary efforts were made to find a place for a patient in Kingston. It's the kind of situation that I would entirely agree with the member is unacceptable. People have to be treated in their own community as far as possible, and I was delighted to then learn that a bed had been made available, but that will continue to happen in the short term.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, given that there's a crisis—there may be nice, long-term solutions, but I want to get to the short-term solutions. There's a crisis right now in this province. What are you doing in the next 24 hours about this crisis?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** What I am doing is in the final stages of consultations with the hospitals as to what kind of interim solutions to meet the growing demand for haemodialysis services we can have as we continue planning systematically for the long term. This has not happened yesterday or the day before. These are dis-

cussions we have been having with the hospitals over the last several months and we still have some details—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** You've been having discussions. The bottom line is, you're going to have to reallocate financial resources in your ministry even more than you've done to address this. What is your response to that?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** My response is that we are actively undergoing those kinds of examinations and reallocations, and I share the member's hope that I will be able to give Dr Mendelsohn and the very many patients who need care an answer as soon as possible. I don't have one today and I won't have one within 24 hours.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Let me tell you a little bit about your central east study. I'm absolutely fuming about this. I mean, the central east people, in your effort to make everyone feel so wonderful about dialysis—and I'll tell you frankly, I just came from a seniors' seminar in my riding where there were 160 people and the only questions I got all morning were about dialysis, in the town of New Tecumseth and Alliston more specifically.

I am told that the 11 patients in the area have all been called. They're going to meet with consultants who have been hired by the central east people. They're going to meet Monday night in a feel-good round table session in the hospital boardroom in Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston. Price Waterhouse has been hired to ask these consumers what they think about dialysis service in the province of Ontario.

Do you think that's a useful exercise with respect to the scarce dollars we have in health care today, when 4,000 people in my area have signed a petition and all the patients have been down or made representations either to the standing committee or to you directly? We already know what these patients think about services. They don't want to have to drive to Toronto or Orillia any more. They want services close to home, and I know you agree with that. The problem is you don't do anything about it. Price Waterhouse is spending I don't know how much money—I'm about to find that out from one of the people on the committee—getting them all together in an extremely insulting way to ask them on Monday night what they think about dialysis services in this province.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm shocked that the member—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** You're shocked? I'm bloody well shocked.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** —would consider that insulting. To suggest, if you were going to invest hundreds of millions of dollars of public money in services for dialysis patients, that you not ask the people who need the services, who are not uniform in their needs, their demands, their requirements, how best those services can be provided is to me the most paternalistic way of planning the health care system from a member who was part of a party that cut health care services.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, we have asked those patients. We had the social development committee study this issue ad nauseam.

*Interjections.*



**The Vice-Chair:** Order.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** There have been studies ad nauseam on this issue—

**Hon Mrs Grier:** And if you're going to shout at me—

**The Vice-Chair:** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Vice-Chair:** Order, Mr Wilson. Order.

This committee is recessed for five minutes.

*The committee recessed from 1643 to 1651.*

**The Vice-Chair:** We are resuming questions to the Minister of Health in this estimates committee. I would just like to caution all members of the committee that the Chair will not tolerate grave disorder. I realize that members feel strongly about issues, but we cannot tolerate grave disorder. Mr Wilson.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, can I merely respond, with all due respect to Mr Wilson, that prevention is the thrust of our health care system. High blood pressure does contribute to kidney disease, and I would hate to have 12 patients in Alliston needing care.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I appreciate your overtures, but at this stage in my life I'm not really worried about my particular life. I'm a little more worried about the dialysis patients in my area and throughout the province. Perhaps I could ask you, in a calm way, if we couldn't get a few more specifics from you, although maybe all you can provide us with today is a time frame on some future funding announcements.

In fairness, the response that came back under your signature, as you know, stemming from recommendation 6 of the social development committee, which was that the Ministry of Health report to the standing committee within 30 days on its commitment to funding dialysis and related treatment in the current fiscal year, frankly the unspecific, pretty pappy response, Minister, that came back said there are discussions going on and all kinds of things that we already know, but nothing specific about actual funding to meet the patient demands in 1994-95 and beyond.

That's what Dr Mendelssohn is referring to in his letter, and I think that's what prompted his blood pressure to go up and obviously write that letter, given that this response I really don't think is worthy of a minister of the crown. Perhaps you could undertake to get back to us in the extreme near future about what the government is going to do about this crisis.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd be happy to do that, Mr Chair.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Could I ask, Minister, what avenue you will choose to convey your response, given that the Legislature may be adjourning this Thursday?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I don't know whether that is a fact. As I watch the debate, I hope we are adjourning on Thursday. I'm not sure I can commit to get back before that, but I could certainly advise the Chair and I'm sure that the clerk could then share that response with all members of the committee.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Wilson, do you have any further questions of the minister at this time? You have an

additional 10 minutes if you wish to exercise it.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Don't the five come off his time?

**Mr Jim Wilson:** No, you were yelling at me.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** No. Hansard only got you yelling at me.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** I was just having a normal discussion. You should come from my area of the riding; that's the way we do business. If you don't answer questions, we get to the point.

**The Vice-Chair:** Let's not get into it again. You have 10 minutes, Mr Wilson.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I understand from a couple of things that happened in the last 24 hours, particularly watching CityPulse News last night and CITY-TV—there's an interesting transcript here where, in effect, the College of Physicians and Surgeons talks about a problem that it sees in interpretation of the Consent to Treatment Act.

Without reading the whole transcript, I guess it boils down to their contention that patients who are incapable but who cannot interact in a meaningful way because they are confused, demented or semiconscious, even if they're in a non-life-threatening situation yet they're unable to communicate—there seems to be some confusion as to whether or not a rights adviser must be called in at that time.

To be a little more specific, then you said, and I'm paraphrasing, that CPSO was escalating people's anxieties by not giving a totally accurate picture. Of course, at the end of the interview the interviewer checked with the Ontario Advocacy Coalition and they said that the scenario presented to you by the CPSO was indeed correct.

The obvious problem here, when it comes to the good of the public, is that with this confusion out there or with this interpretation of the act, treatment could be delayed to those people who may need it and who get caught in, frankly, a rather bureaucratic and cumbersome process. I'd like you to comment on that particular scenario under that act.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'd very much like to do that because I was certainly very concerned by the interpretation that the College of Physicians and Surgeons put on what is very important legislation that this House has adopted, the Consent to Treatment Act. I might ask Gilbert Sharpe, the director of legal services, to amplify.

I just want to be very clear to the committee that the scenario that was described by the college at its news conference, which suggested in regard to somebody who was incapacitated that treatment could not be provided until a rights adviser had been obtained, was quite wrong. Because if the person is incapable of asking for a rights adviser, then no rights adviser would be sought and the family or the substitute decision-maker would make the decision.

This legislation is designed to strengthen the role of the family in giving consent and making decisions with respect to care. But if I could ask Mr Sharpe to come forward and introduce himself, I'm sure he could respond to the question.



**Mr Jim Wilson:** While he comes forward, I just want to read the actual scenario from the transcript. It says, "If, for example, you brought your elderly mother into an emergency department with a non-life-threatening illness, she's incoherent, the doctor decides she's incapable of consenting to treatment but he's not sure if she understands her rights, he cannot treat until a rights adviser is called in, even if you're standing there saying, 'Yes, go ahead, treat her.'" I imagine the "you" is a family or friend or somebody else.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Sharpe, could you introduce yourself for the purposes of Hansard?

**Mr Gilbert Sharpe:** Yes, Gilbert Sharpe. I'm the legal services director in Health. That in fact was the version that was in the first reading of the bill, but that's not what we've ended up with. We've made significant changes after extensive consultation with many individuals and organizations, including all of the major health care groups.

The current and final provision of the bill on rights advice simply says that the individual, in a non-emergency situation, for a controlled act, which is a fairly intrusive thing that you're about to do to someone, should be told that they've indeed been found to be incapable of making a decision and that you'll be seeking consent from someone else and that if they choose to speak to a rights adviser, then one will be called in to talk to them to explain things to them as to what their options might be.

It's not mandatory or essential that a rights adviser would come in. It wasn't in the first reading version, but that was ultimately changed through the process.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Could I just ask about a scenario and a couple of examples? How does a patient know that these rights advisers exist and know enough to call them? Given the explanation you've given, there's no mention of rights adviser, so how would a semiconscious patient know enough to even ask for a rights adviser?

**Mr Sharpe:** It would depend how out of it the patient was. If they were in a very bad way and really not terribly lucid, probably telling them that they're entitled to have a rights adviser come in and talk to them wouldn't be very effective or clear.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** At what point do you have to tell them?

**Mr Sharpe:** When the physician talks to the patient, attempts to explain to him what procedure is being contemplated and attempts to get consent, which of course is true of any of us, and it becomes clear to the physician that the patient doesn't have the ability to give an informed consent. The decision is made that they're not mentally capable to consent to the treatment that's being proposed.

1700

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Okay, but isn't the CPSO's contention right at this point that this is where it's unclear? The rights adviser then must be called because the patient is deemed to be incapable of understanding the conversation that's going on with the physician, and that delays treatment.

**Mr Sharpe:** You're right, and if that were the current state of the bill, that would be a delay in every case, but that's not the way it reads now. What it says is that the physician who has decided the patient's not capable has to tell him he's made that finding and ask him if he'd like a rights adviser to be brought in to explain what his options might be. Our expectation would be that in the vast majority of cases the patient would not want that, and then one would just proceed to the family who are there and they would give the consent and the procedure would take place.

In a situation where a patient disagrees with the finding that he's not capable of making his own decision, then there would be a delay and a rights adviser would come and explain that there's a means of challenging the finding. That provision is taken from something that was put into the Mental Health Act in 1986-87 in the last major round of amendments to that act.

It reflects the notion that if any of us were to have the ability to make our own informed choices about our health care removed from us by a doctor saying we're not sufficiently capable, then if we want to, we should have a means of challenging that, not through the courts, because there are terrible delays and costs involved, but at least through some mechanism where we can call into question the decision that we can't make decisions for ourselves. So that's the process.

Then the question became, how do patients know about that process? At one time the thought was that maybe every time a doctor makes that choice, there should be a rights adviser. After some discussion with the medical profession and others, the hospital association, it was decided that it should not trigger automatically but should be at the request of the patient.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Minister, given the confusion out there, because the CPSO has reviewed the copy of the legislation that was passed by the Legislature and there is a great deal of confusion, I guess my question is: (a) Are you firm on your planned proclamation date of this legislation or are you flexible on that to give more time for the public and health care professionals to understand the legislation? If you are firm, part (b) would be: What efforts are you making now to ensure that everybody understands this legislation as it was intended?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm sure, as the member is aware, this piece of legislation, together with the Advocacy Act and the Substitute Decisions Act, is a package of legislation that works as a package, but they are also separate pieces of legislation. They had I think two rounds of public hearings, over 100 amendments, and a great deal of work has gone into preparing for implementation and proclamation, which will occur early in 1995.

I concur with the member that this is legislation that is very important to the public and that the public has been seeking for I think 15 years, so to explain and educate the public as to how to use it effectively and what it means is very much part of our implementation strategy.

The three acts and the three different ministries—my own, the Ministry of Citizenship and the Ministry of the Attorney General—have all been working in a very collaborative way to have an education program and

information program so that before proclamation, which will occur but there will not be a delay in that, early in 1995, we make every effort to inform people about their rights and about, as I say, the ways in which the legislation is user-friendly. I really welcome the member's encouragement of us to do that, because we plan to.

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Minister, I just want to leave you with an inquiry that came to my attention this morning at my seniors' seminar. Perhaps one of your staff could write this down. It will save me the time to put it in letter form. Mr Duncan Rennie has given me his permission to bring this to you. I told him we were coming to the estimates committee today. His phone number is area code 705-435-2295. His address is 1 Greenbriar Road, Alliston, Ontario, L9R 1R5.

Mr Rennie is a leukaemia patient. He was involved in the interferon tests—what do we call those things?—drug tests, studies. Obviously, that study program is over. He now still requires interferon. It's not covered readily on the drug formulary. His doctor is Dr David Sutton at Toronto General Hospital, oncology. He filled out, apparently, a section 8, according to the patient, several months ago, and they've not heard anything from your ministry. I'm just wondering if somebody could check that and perhaps doublecheck with the patient.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I'm surprised at that, because, as I responded in the House today in response to a question, certainly the urgency of some drugs is being considered as we deal with those requests and we've reduced the turnaround on at least one of them from 61 days to less than seven days. We've made a note of the situation and I'll undertake to have an investigation and get back to you.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr Wilson, for your questions. I now turn to the NDP caucus. Do you have any further questions?

**Mr Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent):** We'll let the opposition ask questions.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr O'Neil, you had one additional question, or do you want to defer?

**Mr O'Neil:** David would like to go for a few minutes and then I have a couple of things that I'd love to raise too.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** I thought we had some agreement on trying to adjourn—

**The Vice-Chair:** We only have about five minutes. If you could have your questions done in five minutes, we could—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** Are you sure that you have five minutes?

**The Vice-Chair:** They have five minutes.

**Mr O'Neil:** What time are we supposed to leave here?

**The Vice-Chair:** Our plan is, since a number of members, including the minister, wish to get to the House on Bill 119, we want to conclude estimates this afternoon at about—

**Mr Jim Wilson:** How much time did I get?

**The Vice-Chair:** You had your recommended alloca-

tion of time, Mr Wilson. Mr Ramsay.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** Minister, I just wanted to get a follow-up from a question I'd asked you in the House a couple of weeks ago in regard to the northern health travel program and the changes you're making in that program. As I said in my question, I agree with what you're attempting to do, but just with the problems we're running into, do you have any update as to the cleaning up of the list, making it more accurate as to the referral doctors so we can have a better response from the ministry when people put in their applications for the travel?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** It's certainly a question I have answered and certainly my colleagues on our side have raised with me, particularly the question of paediatric specialists. I think I acknowledged in the House that a specialist in orthopaedics, for example, might not be a specialist in paediatric orthopaedics. So my recognition is clear that it is the nearest specialist for the subspecialty, if that's what we're talking about.

I understand that we have in fact made some progress with respect to cleaning up the list and that the time has been reduced. If there are some specifics that I'm not aware of, I'd be happy to look into them, but I don't have anything more up to date than that.

**Mr Ramsay:** I'm glad to see in a way that the policy's changing. I guess what happens is, when somebody puts in the application for the grant, the computer, however it operates, just spits out to say no, there's an orthopaedic surgeon available in Kirkland Lake; therefore, that person should have gone there.

I guess I understand now that you seem to have an understanding of how it should work. I'm just wondering, how long is it going to take for the system actually to work that way, the way you do want it to work?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** This particular problem came to our attention I think just at the end of last month, so what the northern health—I'm trying to think of the name of what we call our new—we have a new office in northern Ontario, in Sudbury and out of Thunder Bay, working to work with the north and meet those needs. Certainly they undertook to call all the orthopaedic specialists and confirm which of them were treating children and which ones were not.

They estimated that that work would take approximately three weeks, which would take us to today, which is why I haven't got any up-to-date information and can merely repeat that, yes, we acknowledge the problem, work has begun on trying to sort out the subspecialties within that list and I hope that will make it better for people in the north. That has been our long-term objective, and I'm very pleased with the progress we have made.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr O'Neil, you have about two minutes.

**Mr O'Neil:** Just briefly, Minister—I'm just sorry there isn't more time—one of the real crisis areas that I feel we're also experiencing in the province of Ontario, a crisis that has been there for a number of years, previous governments also, is the crisis in the mental health



field. You know, we can call you, we can say we need a bed or an operating table for a heart attack or for cancer treatment or things like that, but a lot of the hidden injury that is out there today lies in the mental health area.

1710

I know in my area, as well as in other areas throughout the province, we have a problem getting proper medical staff to service the area. We have problems getting enough funding, enough homes to assist. I realize we're very short of time, but it's something I know you're dealing with and I'd just like to impress upon you that it is a real crisis in some areas getting the help that's needed for these people who are being left in their homes, left out on the street or not given the care they should be receiving. I don't know how we solve it, but it is a crisis.

The other thing in my area, and it was expressed the other day, is the number of doctors who are actually leaving the province and moving to the States. As I mentioned the other day in the Legislature, in our area alone the other day it was announced that three of our doctors in Trenton are leaving for the States. These are doctors with very large practices, and the other doctors, because of the volume of work they have or because of costs, are not able to take these patients. I don't know where these people are going to go, I really don't. It's a real concern.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Let me respond to that by saying that, like mental health, is not a new problem for this province. Doctors have always moved when they saw it to their advantage to do so. I was pleased that in fact some statistics, I think last year, indicated that 85% of those who moved to the States returned after a period of time, because they found collecting their own bills and dealing with the kind of system that is there was not nearly as satisfactory to them in the practice of medicine as our system. But it is an ongoing issue and one that, working with the universities and the academic health science centres on, for the first time, human resource planning for the health care system, we believe we can make some progress in time.

**Mr O'Neil:** Where do these people go? I guess that's my question. Where are these patients going to go when the doctors who are there are not taking any more patients and we have the doctors who are leaving?

**Hon Mrs Grier:** What we have is unfortunately a system that doesn't allow us to say to doctors, "Thou shalt practice in Trenton, Belleville or northern Ontario." Doctors consider themselves small businesses and entrepreneurs and they go where they see that they can make an income.

I would hope that the practices of the doctors who are leaving would be put up for sale at a reasonable price and that privileges for new doctors would be afforded in the hospitals concerned, because those are often barriers over which we as a ministry have no control. But in the interests of their patients, I would assume that they would be encouraging people to come in.

Then we have to leave it to communities to persuade doctors in areas like the greater Toronto area, where there are more doctors per capita than any objective evaluation would say are needed, that the quality of life they will have in Trenton and Belleville far exceeds what they may get in parts of downtown Toronto or the GTA. I fully believe that, but I don't have the power as minister to pick them up and put them where they're needed. As public servants paid by the public, I wish there was a way of doing that, but there isn't.

Let me speak briefly on mental health reform and refer you to Putting People First, the first mental health strategy and planning document the province has had. I'd be happy to send you a copy and hope that would address some of your concerns.

**The Vice-Chair:** The time allocated through the estimates process for the Ministry of Health has now expired. I want to thank the minister for her time in this committee, as well as all the members of the Legislature who participated in this process, for their questions. I also thank the Ministry of Health staff for assisting the minister in some of her responses.

At this time, we will have the votes on the Ministry of Health estimates.

**Hon Mrs Grier:** Mr Chair, we provided today the answers to a number of questions that had been asked before. There are some more to come. I assume that what I will do, as I said in response to an earlier question, is provide them to you and they can then be circulated. We will undertake to do that before the end of the week if we possibly can, knowing that members will be dispersed next week.

**The Vice-Chair:** The clerk will ensure that the members receive their written responses.

We move to voting.

Shall vote 1501 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1502 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1503 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1504 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall vote 1505 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall the 1994-95 estimates of the Ministry of Health carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall I report the 1994-95 estimates of the Ministry of Health to the House? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

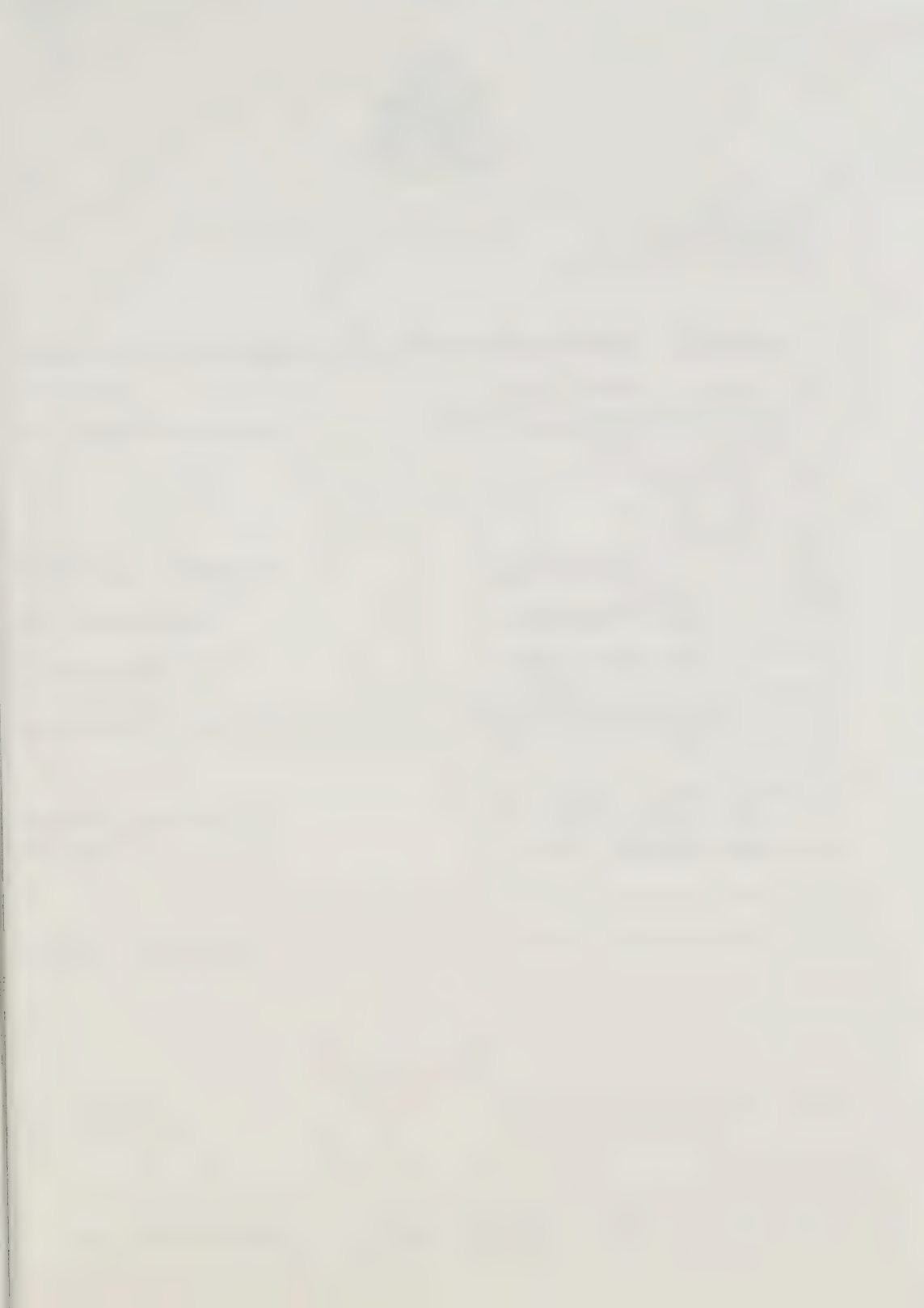
**Hon Mrs Grier:** Thank you, Mr Chair. May I congratulate you on bringing this to a fine conclusion. I thank all the members for their help and questions.

**The Vice-Chair:** We will reconvene tomorrow at 3:30 on the Ministry of Transportation estimates for six hours. The committee adjourned at 1716.











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**\*Ramsay, David** (Timiskaming L)

Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Wessenger, Paul (Simcoe Centre ND) for Mr Lessard

Wilson, Gary, (Kingston and The Islands/Kingston et Les Îles ND) for Mr Wiseman

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West/-Ouest PC) for Mr Carr

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

O'Neil, Hugh P. (Quinte L)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

**Staff / Personnel:** McLellan, Ray, research officer, Legislative Research Service

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ISSN 1181-6465

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 35th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 22 June 1994**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 22 juin 1994**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

**Ministry of Transportation**

**Ministère des transports**

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 22 June 1994

Mercredi 22 juin 1994

The committee met at 1543 in committee room 2.

## MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

**The Chair (Mr Cameron Jackson):** We've assembled today to commence the estimates of the Ministry of Transportation. We have six hours that the House has assigned us in which to do that.

I'd welcome the minister, the Honourable Gilles Pouliot, Minister, in accordance with our standing orders—you're familiar with the process—the first half-hour is yours. Then I will recognize the official opposition, then the third party and then you'll be given 30 minutes for a summary rebuttal or response.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** On a point of order, Mr Chair: Minister, in view of the very limited amount of time that we have for review of your ministry, I would ask you to truncate your comments to less than half an hour. I am proposing that I make less than a half-hour initial statement, in fact a very short initial statement, and ask that any time that I do not take will be allocated to the PC Party for additional questioning as opposed to being allocated on an even basis. I would ask the minister and the official opposition if perhaps they would agree to the same arrangement.

**The Chair:** First of all, it's not a point of order, but if it's a suggestion to change the approach today, we are guided by our standing orders, and beyond that, it would have to be by unanimous consent.

The minister, and then Mr Daigeler, and briefly, please, because we are out of order in terms of the dialogue, but we'll allow a brief moment on this subject.

**Hon Gilles Pouliot (Minister of Transportation):** Thank you, Chair. In the interest of time, I intend to read the statement. We have an important message and we will avail ourselves of the courtesy and the opportunity that the statutes spell out. We shall be within our limit, our allocation, of 30 minutes.

**Mr Hans Daigeler (Nepean):** If we don't finish today, we will still have the remaining six hours or whatever's left of the six hours at whatever time. Then we will take that up. Am I correct in that?

**The Chair:** That is correct. To be more specific, should the House rise tomorrow, then this committee has sought time to sit during the summer and we will complete the Ministry of Transportation estimates at that time. But we cannot proceed to the next ministry until we've completed our full six hours. If we're sitting next week, we will reconvene next Tuesday at 3:30.

I don't have a consensus, so, Minister, I recognize you. Please proceed.

**Mr Turnbull:** Can I have a clarification? If I use less than my half-hour, can that time that I leave be allocated exclusively to the PC Party for questioning and answers?

**The Chair:** If you so choose, I'd have to have unanimous consent. You're given up to 30 minutes to present your concerns, but within that 30 minutes, Mr Turnbull, you may use that any way you see fit. If you have a 15-minute narrative and a 15-minute question, that's quite within your discretion. But if you just use 20 minutes, you will have yielded the front portion of your time allocation.

**Mr Turnbull:** I would ask unanimous consent that in fact that be allocated appropriately, to the extent that we have opening statements—

**The Chair:** Mr Turnbull, this whole discussion is quite out of order, I'm afraid. I've given the ruling of the Chair. I think I've made it clear to you that you can use your time in a variety of ways. I must proceed with the minister in accordance with the standing orders. Minister.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you, Chair. It augurs very well.

Ladies and gentlemen, mesdames et messieurs, members of the standing committee, I welcome this opportunity to discuss our government's transportation programs. Our goal is to provide you with as much information as possible and to answer any questions you may have about the ministry's activities. To that end, my deputy minister, Mr George Davies, and other senior staff will be available throughout these proceedings.

In my opening statement, I want to focus on three main areas: the ministry's capital programs and their role in our government's strategy to create and maintain jobs; some recent changes in our approach to doing business at the ministry; and our commitment and achievements in the area of improving road safety in Ontario.

First, let me discuss our capital programs, the money we spend on roads, bridges, transit, ferries, airports and other transportation facilities. Our government spends about half of its capital budget through the Ministry of Transportation. That is because we know that spending on transportation is an excellent investment in Ontario's future. Transportation investments result in both short-term and long-term benefits. Every dollar we spend on transportation puts \$2.50 back into the provincial economy and every \$1 million we spend on road construction creates 20 new jobs.

Today there are thousands of people in Ontario who need those jobs to support their families and communities, to pay their bills and put food on the table. By

creating work, we are helping people across the province to enjoy a better quality of life.

Transportation investments also improve Ontario's long-term economic outlook. Our businesses need good roads, safe highways and efficient public transit to be competitive, today and in the next century. Our capital spending helps ensure a brighter economic future for our whole society.

Last year, despite the recession, my ministry committed almost \$900 million to its regular highway program and some \$700 million for municipal roads. It was a record high year for construction activities, with a total of 440 highway contracts tendered. Those projects created the equivalent of more than 10,000 jobs for one year.

This year, thanks to a number of business innovations and new partnerships, I'm pleased to say the total money being spent on highway construction in Ontario has increased by fully 35%. Capital spending for municipal roads is also up this year by some 37%.

I want to make it clear that, although our own budget numbers may not show it, there's a lot more money being spent on roads and bridges in Ontario. The money comes from a number of sources: our government, our federal and municipal partners and the private sector.

#### 1550

As you know, the government of Ontario signed an agreement last January to invest \$722 million in the Canada-Ontario infrastructure works program, which we are undertaking with our federal friends. In total, this is a \$2.1-billion program. Our latest figures show it will create up to 37,000 direct and indirect jobs during the next two years, and 40% of the money allocated under the program so far is being used for roads and bridges.

Since 1991, our government has invested about \$12 billion through Jobs Ontario, and we have spent most of that money on infrastructure: to upgrade and expand local roads and bridges, to improve sewer and water services and to provide other necessary facilities.

Earlier this spring we chose a private sector consortium to design, build and operate the new Highway 407. This highway has been called the "missing link" in transportation in the greater Toronto area. It is the biggest highway project of its kind in Ontario's history and, I trust, the largest highway contract in North America at present.

Highway 407 will create 20,000 full-time jobs during construction; reduce the \$2-billion annual cost of congestion on roads and highways throughout the greater Toronto area; and it will prepare Ontario's companies to compete for highway megaprojects around the world.

Several preliminary contracts for Highway 407 are under way. The consortium recently advised us that in order to meet the construction schedule, it could spend up to \$300 million on the project this year. That expenditure alone would create up to 6,000 new jobs, at a time when they are most needed.

In addition to highway construction, members will recall the Premier's announcement last year of \$1.5 billion from Jobs Ontario to speed up construction of five new transit lines in the GTA.

The ministry is currently working with Metro Toronto

to find ways to make rapid transit expansion affordable to all parties. We have provided Metro with a plan for its review that includes options such as benefit-sharing charges, federal land contribution and a number of options for innovative financing. No doubt this plan will continue to be discussed in detail in the coming days and weeks, and we look forward to a positive outcome.

Depuis 1990, le gouvernement a également investi plus de 16 millions de dollars pour apporter aux gares du Réseau GO des modifications qui les rendront plus accessibles aux personnes qui utilisent des aides à la mobilité pour se déplacer.

Nouvelles attitudes dans le milieu des affaires : l'essentiel à ce chapitre, c'est que nous utilisons les dépenses en immobilisations du ministère pour contribuer à la reprise économique de l'Ontario, car elles permettent de créer des emplois et aident les entreprises à être plus concurrentielles. Mais les dépenses du gouvernement provincial pour les routes et les autoroutes n'ont rien de nouveau. Ce qui est nouveau, par contre, c'est l'évolution du milieu des affaires actuel et les méthodes créatives que nous adoptons pour relever nos défis.

Today, as never before, the government recognizes the need to invest our limited resources wisely. We know we must squeeze the greatest possible value for every tax dollar and, in many cases today, investing wisely means changing the way we do business.

Highway 407 is a prime example of our changing approach to the challenge of new transportation investment. The need for Highway 407 was first identified in the 1950s. The route was established in the 1970s and construction work began in 1987. To date, projects worth \$130 million have already been completed.

At this rate, and in today's fiscal environment, Highway 407 would not have been completed before the year 2020. Therefore, this government would be in its 12th term of office. But our people and businesses need this highway right now. They need the thousands of jobs it will provide and they need those jobs today, not 10 or 20 years down the road.

We needed to accelerate the process. The solution was to introduce a major change in the way the ministry does business. We created a new partnership with a private sector consortium called Canadian Highways International Corp. This group of Ontario companies will design, build and operate Highway 407 on the province's behalf, and it will deliver the project not in 25 years, but in five years, Mr Turnbull.

This approach has many other important benefits. For example, we identified \$300 million in savings through value engineering, economies of scale, long-term contracts and access to materials. As well, the Ontario companies that participate in the project will gain expertise to help them land similar jobs around the world.

Highway 407 is a \$1-billion project. It will be financed through a new crown agency called the Ontario Transportation Capital Corp. This agency allows the government to finance the 407 project without adding a burden of debt to the consolidated revenue fund and without taking money away from other important highway investments.



The 407 project is the largest of its kind in North America. It will be Ontario's first modern toll highway, and the users of the road will pay the greatest share of its cost. The tolls will be collected electronically, using high-tech equipment developed in Ontario. That will create more opportunities for Ontario businesses to export the new technology to other parts of the world.

Partnerships are becoming more and more important to the way my ministry does business. For example, we're developing new partnerships with Ontario's roadbuilders. We are giving them more freedom to decide the best way to get the job done, as long as the final product meets our specifications, of course.

The principle here is that the ministry specifies the final result needed and the contractor determines how those specifications will be met. This is a major change from the days when the ministry was involved in direct supervision of all aspects of a project. It recognizes that Ontario has a mature and highly skilled roadbuilding industry and that experienced contractors do not need ministry staff to hold their hands while they do the work.

I could give you many other examples of this kind of cooperation and partnership, but I will just give a few:

We created a partnership with Bell Canada to allow the company to run its \$110-million fibre optics network along highway rights of way in northern Ontario.

We joined forces with a Toronto real estate company in an adopt-a-highway program to clean up litter on Highway 400.

We're working with three private sector partners to develop a hand-held computer called TravelGuide that will give motorists up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions.

We created the Transit Integration Task Force with local municipalities and transit operators to move towards "seamless" public transit in the GTA area.

We have formed partnerships with the city of Kingston, the township of Manitowadge and others to share maintenance supplies, equipment and facilities. In the case of Manitowadge, our partners in that township were sort of a role model. They set the tone of innovation and trust for the future of how business will be done. They were most receptive to the opportunities to do business with the Ministry of Transportation.

En plus de ces nouveaux partenariats, mon ministère s'efforce d'améliorer le service à la clientèle dans tous ses champs d'activité. Nombre d'entre vous avez vu le guichet ServiceOntario dans l'édifice Macdonald ici à Queen's Park. Il s'agit d'appareils de libre-service qui permettent aux gens de s'informer selon leur convenance auprès du ministère et de payer leurs transactions par carte de crédit. Dans plusieurs endroits, nous avons aussi installé à titre expérimental des fenêtres de service à l'intention de la clientèle en voiture.

Au cours de la dernière session, notre gouvernement a aussi rendu obligatoire la trousse d'information sur les véhicules d'occasion. Maintenant, les consommateurs qui achètent des véhicules d'occasion entre particuliers ont maintenant la description complète du véhicule, la liste de ses anciens propriétaires et des renseignements sur les

sûretés et la véritable valeur marchande du véhicule.

Les améliorations que nous avons apportées au service à la clientèle profitent à plus de six millions de conducteurs partout dans la province. Elles peuvent aussi améliorer l'efficacité du ministère. Par exemple, nous avons invité les propriétaires à renouveler l'immatriculation de leur véhicule tous les deux ans plutôt que chaque année. Les gens devront se rendre moins souvent dans les bureaux du ministère et nos frais administratifs et de fonctionnement s'en trouveront également réduits.

As I mentioned earlier, we are living in an era of major change. In addition to the business changes I have outlined, my ministry is also facing the challenge of relocating 1,000 staff members to St Catharines. Many of our long-time staff members have also opted for early retirement, so that we also face the challenge of finding and training new staff.

Let me turn now to our accomplishments in the area of road safety. We've done a great deal in this area in the past few months. This, if you will pardon the pun, is no accident. Who wrote this?

**Mr Noel Duignan (Halton North):** I don't know, but you're reading it.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Our government's goal is to make Ontario's roads the safest in North America. I'm proud to say that we have made considerable progress towards achieving that objective.

There are many good reasons for concentrating on road safety. More than 1,100 people die in road collisions every year. We know that 85% of all collisions are caused by driver mistake: everything from losing concentration for a moment to tailgating to drinking and driving.

Everyone in the province pays for road collisions. We all pay higher taxes and insurance premiums. We spend extra time in traffic jams and hospital waiting rooms. In fact, road collisions cost Ontarians approximately \$9 billion a year. That figure includes 800,000 hours of police time, 38,000 ambulance calls, 9,000 calls to fire departments, 74,000 visits to hospital emergency rooms and 146,000 days of acute hospital care. When people hear those numbers, they don't ask why our government is doing so much to promote safety; in fact, they're asking why we're not doing more by building safer roads and enforcing the traffic laws. The fact is of course that we are doing those things and much more.

#### 1600

Two weeks ago, for example, the ministry participated in Road Check '94, a safety blitz for commercial trucks that is carried out every year across North America. Last year the ministry inspected just under 3,000 large trucks and took 33% of these vehicles out of service for problems such as mechanical defects, drivers who spent too long behind the wheel, dangerous goods violations and load security problems.

Although we haven't yet had an opportunity to analyse this year's numbers in detail, our preliminary results indicate that the safety problems involving large commercial trucks on our roads most unfortunately may be getting worse. This suggests that the ministry's truck inspection programs need to be even more aggressive



than they've been: 3,000 times, 3,000 incidents; 33% of those 3,000 are not roadworthy and our preliminary indication says it's getting a little worse, a condition which is not acceptable to the Ministry of Transportation. We will indeed become more aggressive.

In the area of passenger safety, one of the best ways to reduce injuries and deaths on the roads is to increase the use of seatbelts. During the past three years, public awareness campaigns and enforcement have helped increase seatbelt use in Ontario by 12%. Our aim is to reach 100% of compliance. Ours is not a record of perfection, but it has been a record of constant improvement. We've gone from 73% to 84% compliance in the last two years and we're now dealing with the hard core, the remaining 16% who must be deterred; give them a chance to stay with us longer, to be like the others by buckling up.

Strict enforcement of the law will of course help us reach that goal. Seatbelt use has been mandatory in Ontario for 18 years. People know the law. Our government recently had an incentive to encourage people to buckle up. Drivers who do not wear seatbelts will gain, add, two licence demerit points as well as being hit in the pocketbook fairly big time, \$90.

We're also planning to introduce another safety initiative, that of photo-radar, this year. The measure will help the police enforce speed limits which exist to promote safety. Other jurisdictions have had considerable success with photo-radar technology. Average speeds have come down and safety has improved. We hope to achieve similar results here in Ontario. One out of every six fatalities is the result of excessive speed. We wish to reduce that, so we're introducing another safety initiative, that of photo-radar.

The government is also continuing its support for RIDE programs to help reduce drinking and driving throughout the province. Drinking and driving is not just illegal today, it has become socially unacceptable. Since 1982, the number of drivers involved in alcohol-related collisions has dropped a full 47%. That's a remarkable achievement. It was made possible through the cooperation and hard work of community groups, the police, government agencies and the private sector.

But drinking and driving is still a serious problem in Ontario. Hard-core offenders are still getting behind the wheel. In 1982, there were 29,000 convictions for impaired driving, and 59% of the drivers who were convicted were repeat offenders, recidivists. Our government is currently looking at a whole range of new measures to deal with this ongoing problem.

My ministry is currently working with many organizations, including the Ontario Safety League, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, the insurance industry and others to promote the goal of road safety. We're actively seeking new partners who can help us achieve our goals.

One of our government's most important safety initiatives is the introduction of graduated drivers' licences, graduated licensing for new drivers. The program came into effect June 6 this year. Graduated licensing ensures that new drivers acquire experience and advanced skills

in safer conditions. It is a measure that will save many lives, and I'm proud of having seen it through the House.

Some of the other things I've talked about today, such as our capital investments and our work to improve customer service, help improve the safety of our roads. This year, for example, the government has committed \$100 million of my ministry's highway capital budget for safety measures. We're investing in passing lanes, in highway median barriers and truck arrester beds. We're improving highway lighting. We're also installing crash barriers that can absorb greater impacts. We are marking the pavement with chevrons to reduce tailgating.

In some cases better customer service also means safer roads. A good example is the COMPASS system we have introduced on some of the province's major highways. The system uses changeable messages that can warn drivers about traffic conditions ahead. COMPASS video cameras help the emergency vehicles get to the scene of a collision faster.

In fact, the COMPASS system is an excellent example of how all our government's transportation activities are designed to work together in the public interest. COMPASS provides road users with better service. The system also helps make Ontario's highways safer and more efficient, which helps to improve Ontario's economic competitiveness; and the COMPASS system is new Ontario technology that can be and has been sold in markets around the world.

I have focused on three main areas of the ministry's activities in my opening statement today. I have talked about capital programs, our changing business practices and our achievements towards the goal of safer roads. I think this provides a good introduction to some of our most important initiatives this year.

Comme je le disais plus tôt, nous sommes venus ici pour fournir des renseignements au Comité et pour répondre à vos questions. Je conclurai donc mes remarques simplement en répétant que nous apprécions l'occasion qui nous est offerte de partager avec vous tous ces renseignements et que nous espérons avoir le plaisir de rendre ces séances les plus productives possible.

**Mr Daigeler:** First of all, I've always been impressed with the quality of the opening remarks that have been made by the ministers of Transportation, and I think this probably reflects the staff that is available. I did review, in preparation for these estimates, previous ones and I must say the statements were always quite well done. Perhaps you can pass those compliments on to whoever they should be addressed to, because you probably don't quite write those opening statements yourself.

**The Chair:** If they had known they would be spoken so fast, they would have had a few more in there.

**Mr Daigeler:** Anyway, I frankly don't have such a nicely prepared statement for you, and in view of the fact that we may only have today until we adjourn for the summer, I will put forward quite a few questions that normally would come up during the debate. But seeing that there are several representatives of the ministry here—I don't know whether there's anybody else left in your ministry, with all the officials here; I guess you

have the cream of the crop here today, which is good—I will put them on the record.

I will start with your own remarks first. Obviously I'm just reading them at this point, but a few things struck me while you were speaking. You'll see the Hansard afterwards as well, and your officials will see it and they can take note of it. To start out, you say on the first page: "Every dollar we spend on transportation puts \$2.50 back into the provincial economy and every million dollars we spend on road construction creates 20 new jobs."

Frankly, I'm very pleased with this statement, because I agree with you and I've been arguing on that basis in the House, in particular for the construction of Highway 416. I am just not convinced at all that you have been following that kind of reasoning with regard to the decisions of your own government.

**1610**

Now perhaps, as we are approaching an election, decisions are forthcoming a little bit in a more generous fashion, recognizing that in fact transportation and infrastructure improvement has a significant impact on the economic health of the province.

I am pleased that you did, without hesitation I guess, participate in the federal infrastructure program and that you have come to relatively quick decisions in what initiatives should be supported. I just received this week the infrastructure initiatives that are funded by the provincial government and the federal government in the Ottawa-Carleton area and I was very pleased to see the wide-ranging number of projects that are going to be under way. Frankly I support that, I think that's great and I appreciate the contribution of the federal government.

That brings me to a question that I have with regard to your statement on page 2, where you say that spending on highway construction in Ontario has increased by 35% and capital spending for municipal roads is also up this year by some 37%. I presume you are calculating here the contribution of the federal government in this figure. If that's not correct, you can indicate that afterwards.

I would like to know more specifically how much of that 35% or 37% is specifically provincial funding increase and what is really due to the generosity of the federal government. I don't want to say that you're not contributing, but certainly I think there's a significant contribution in there from the federal government.

You make reference to the 407, and I am sure we will be getting back to that major project at some length during the six hours that we have. But just to touch on it at this point because you referred to it, when you say that we need the jobs now, we don't need them 10 or 20 years down the road, it makes me frankly uneasy. I agree with you that obviously we need the jobs right now, but we also need them 10 or 20 years down the road.

Frankly, for me, this still raises a very fundamental question in my mind. Are we sort of using up all the road construction work that needs to be done just right now in order to get the economy going without really that long-term consideration?

I remember the discussion in the Ottawa-Carleton area about the Queensway construction and how long it took

to widen the Queensway. That was both under the previous Conservative government and then the Liberal government. I always took the position that you shouldn't really spend all your money all at once, because people have to live and have a job in the roadbuilding industry five, 10 or 15 years down the road.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't do this right now, the 407, but it's a concern that I have, and I'm just wondering what your response is to that. Are you confident that we're going to have another major project like that 20 years down the road? I'm sure people will still want to be employed and work in the roadbuilding industry.

Also, still to the 407, you mentioned on the top of page 3 that the consortium recently advised you that in order to meet the construction schedule it could spend up to \$300 million on the project this year. What's holding this up? It could spend, but will it spend it? What are the conditions? Where is that at, that this money will be spent?

I see that we received earlier, and I appreciate that again, a summary of the agreement with the consortium. I certainly will take a careful look at that. But my question is, will this money be spent this year? What are the conditions for this to be spent?

I must say, I've been somewhat critical, as you probably remember, about this famous saving that you're going to have with regard to the new approach to the construction of the 407. You're referring again in your remarks to \$300 million that you're saving. I'd like to have some details on that, again in due course. I'm just putting you on notice here.

I'm left with somewhat the impression that a significant amount of the saving is simply that you are not doing some of the things that were in the original plans. You're cutting out some access and exits, and obviously there's a saving associated to that and it really has nothing to do with a different approach to all of this. I would like to know some specific details as to what it is that we're actually saving and how you arrive at that figure of \$300 million.

I understand that you're trying to play that 407 project up as much as you can, and I think you have every right to do so, but when you say, "We're not taking away any money from other important highway investments and without adding a burden of debt to the consolidated revenue fund," while that may be technically correct, what you're saying here, nevertheless, it is a debt that is being taken out; it's just not by the government as such, but by the Ontario Transportation Capital Corp, which, by all accounts, is the same thing, and so really the fact that you are going in debt, or the Transportation Capital Corp is going into debt for this 407 project does, obviously, limit the money that is available for other projects.

Again, I do support going ahead with the 407 project and I do support that being a priority at this point, but I'm having great difficulty to say that really, because we're doing it differently, we're doing it through the Transportation Capital Corp, we have all that other money now available for highway construction. I really would like to see where that is, because, you know, in the



end it's all one pot, in particular since it's now no longer the private sector. Even if it were for the private sector, obviously it would have to go to a limited pot that's there, and there aren't unlimited funds even on the open market out there.

While I'm talking about the Transportation Capital Corp, that is perhaps the most important issue that I hope we get a chance to talk about. Frankly, I would have liked you to touch on that in your opening remarks a little bit more, as to what the relationship is and is going to be between your ministry and that new agency. I'm even wondering about this committee, to what extent we, for example, could call before us officials of the Transportation Capital Corp in the estimates process. We'll get a chance to talk about that later.

**The Chair:** Would you make that a formal request?

**Mr Daigeler:** We'll see. We'll let the minister answer first, and then I'll go from there, because clearly they seem to be taking over a significant part of the work of the ministry both in terms of staff and money, I guess. Are they escaping from the estimates process? I don't know. I just would like to hear at some length from the minister what the relationship is going to be between his ministry and the Transportation Capital Corp.

I was concerned quite a bit when I heard you, and it's on page 6, with regard to the safety checks on large commercial trucks. You're saying here, although the results aren't in formally, that the problem may be getting worse with truckers not following the rules that have been set up.

If there are any tentative results available even, I'd like to hear that, because I certainly would want to bring that up with the Ontario Trucking Association. I don't think that would be good news. I think we have collectively, all three parties, been quite supportive of the Ontario truckers in this province and, frankly, would get upset if they're not doing their share with regard to road safety, because I think it is an important concern. If there's evidence that the problem is getting worse rather than better, it would concern me greatly.

1620

Photo-radar: You touched on that, and again, we'll be at some length dealing with these things, but really, when you say that other jurisdictions have had considerable success with photo-radar technology, it brings us back to the debate, what kind of a success? Are you talking about financial success or success in the reduction of accidents? I'm sure you read the recent article in the Toronto Star which, with facts and figures from the Calgary experience, shows that there has not really been any significant reduction in the accidents because of the introduction of photo-radar.

So again I'd like you to address this and make your argument, as you've done before, that this is a safety measure and not a revenue measure. I'd also like to know—but these are more detailed questions—when this is coming. It was supposed to be, I think, in place two months ago and we're still waiting. Not that I'm waiting with bated breath, I must say. You can take your time a little bit. I just would like to know, because people are

phoning my office and my colleagues receive calls, what is going on here and what's happening.

One figure, of course, that I liked seeing in here is the reduction in the number of alcohol-related collisions. You say here that since 1982 they have dropped by 47%. Perhaps if we could have a little bit more recent figures, let's say over the last five years: Has this trend continued in that same way or has there been a significant drop, let's say, between 1982 and 1985? I just don't know. Are we stagnating in terms of reduction of alcohol-related accidents? I would just like, if those figures are available, to have a breakdown over the last few years rather than just over the whole decade.

Graduated licensing: Both Mr Turnbull and myself have been working and supported your efforts in that regard. I hope it's going to work and I would like to have a good report on where it's at at present: what's happening with regard to the preparation of that exit test, with regard to the waiting list and what is the experience—so far, obviously, it's a very limited experience, but I would like some of the officials to speak to how it's working so far, because we've been involved in this. Obviously, questions have been raised, and I would just like to know what the experience has been up to this point.

That's basically with regard to the points that you raised in your own opening statement. Now, as I mentioned, with regard to the actual green book, the estimates book that we're supposed to look at, in particular I am most concerned about the significant shift of the capital funds to the Transportation Capital Corp.

I presume that's what this is, and I'm referring to page 10 here, where it says 31% reduction in program delivery of your ministry. I presume most of that is because this has been shifted over to the Transportation Capital Corp, and I would just like to have a confirmation of that.

On the other hand, I was struck by a 95% increase in the budget for the policy and planning of your ministry. I'm wondering how that jibes with what seems to be a shift of responsibility over to someone else. Shouldn't there be a significant reduction rather than a 95% increase in the policy and planning part of your budget?

On page 16, I have quite a few questions on all the various items that are listed there—perhaps people can be prepared—for example, under "Vehicle Fees, Licences, and Permits," there's actually a reduction of some \$70 million. You think you're going to have less money coming in on that. I'm kind of surprised because you increased fees and licences, and perhaps that's what my leader has been arguing, that because you've increased all these taxes and fees and so on, you're actually getting less money. Is that evidence of that or why is that?

There are a number of things in here. It says "Other Fees, Licences, and Permits." In 1993-94 the actuals were \$700,000 and you're budgeting \$2 million. That's the photo-radar, I presume. Again, I would like to know what's behind this.

"Sales and Rentals": You were estimating for last year \$36 million and you've got only about \$14 million. For this year, you're figuring \$19 million. What's behind this? What is this? Why was your estimate so far off? Is



that the famous initiative to sell off some of the crown assets and then claim it as revenue?

"Vehicle System Improvement Project": I'm wondering what that is. You have \$10 million down. Frankly, on almost of these items that are listed on page 16 I would like some background as to where this is coming from and why the figures are the way they are there.

In terms of more general points, and perhaps you can address this in your response, I have the impression that the Highway Traffic Act should be up for significant reform. There have been many items that we've had to deal with in the House and people are saying, "Why is it that we need legislation for all of these things?"

I am informed that this act hasn't been significantly revised in quite some time and I'm wondering whether you have any plans to do a real overhaul of that act. I think the time has come to take some of the things out that probably should be done either through the regulations process or in other ways that don't necessarily require a decision by the House every time.

For example, although I appreciate your decision, the one that hopefully will still pass before the session adjourns is the one on the different funding arrangement for municipal transit subsidies where—if I might refresh the minister's memory, it's in Bill 175, that thick volume of legal changes—you have to make an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act to allow paying instalments by the ministry in three steps rather than in one shot, thereby saving the municipalities interest payments.

I've been asking for that and you assured me that you were doing it and it's coming in Bill 175. I appreciate that and the municipalities appreciate that, but one may ask why that requires an act of Parliament just to change a funding arrangement. I think there are many aspects in the Highway Traffic Act that probably need a serious review and I'm wondering whether you have any plans.

1630

Railways, frankly, I think are an important issue that you haven't touched on at all in your opening remarks. I fully understand you can't touch on everything, but clearly, with the effort to abandon some short-line railways and now with a decision of the National Transportation Agency, for example, in Barrie not to allow, at least for two years, the abandonment of a short railway line, there are comments to say—in fact I have in front of me an article from the Barrie Examiner that says what's needed is a provincial railway policy, one that can deal with today's problems.

Are you looking at that? I would like to hear from you at some length as to what your vision is from a provincial perspective with regard to railways, because obviously with the federal government we're going to be involved in this. I would like to hear your perspective on these very serious questions.

I'm mentioning the federal government. I'm sure you've followed the ruminations, perhaps we can call it, of the federal Minister of Transport where he is proposing some pretty significant reforms to his department. I'm wondering whether you see similar initiatives that could and perhaps should be taken provincially. He's looking at

a very significant reduction of his own ministry.

I don't think quite the same thing applies to the province, but nevertheless I would like to hear what your reaction is to what has appeared so far in the papers about the statements by Mr Young and how you see the future of your own ministry, the different aspects. That includes the relocation efforts of your ministry. I would like to have a pretty good update on where those efforts are at, when it is to be completed and what are any of the difficulties that you may be experiencing.

I also understand there's quite a significant number of people who are retiring—I think at some point I heard something like a figure of 2,000 people over the short term—in your ministry. How will that affect the work of your ministry and how will you use that event as an opportunity or as a challenge? How will you handle that with regard to the future of your whole ministry and the operation of what you are responsible for?

Obviously, the ferry fees have to be touched on. I'm not sure to what extent you are at liberty to talk about this, since you're appealing the decision, but I would be interested to hear whether you did ask for a legal opinion before you went ahead with trying to charge ferry fees, and, if so, what that opinion was and whether we can get a copy of that. Frankly, I was utterly amazed, when the decision came down, that the judge in very strong words said that you have no authority to do what you're doing. I thought it was pretty damning and I'm looking forward to your defence of this and to your response.

You will permit me to put on the record a question about Highway 416, both as critic and also as a member from the Ottawa-Carleton area and from Nepean. I do say and I do acknowledge that in my riding there's very good construction under way. Of course, that was approved by the previous government as well, but you are continuing that, and that is appreciated. I see lots of trucks. Every time I get an opportunity to go home, I drive that way, so I follow very closely the progress of 416.

But what about the second part? I still hear things in the newspaper that the shovel may be in the ground still this year with regard to the second section. I would like to hear from you what are these famous plans that you have with regard to the private sector, how they could be and should be involved and to what extent that may involve or may not involve tolls.

I do want to say just very briefly, to be on the record already, that I'm very opposed to the notion of tolls because, as I said in the House, with the unexpected and very generous support of the federal government, I think the least the provincial government can do is come up with its two thirds of that relatively minor expenditure of about \$180 million for the completion of the 416.

I say relatively minor because you want to spend—probably more so the Premier, because he seems to be pushing for that, above all—billions of dollars for two subways in the Toronto area that Metro doesn't even want at this point. We're saying if you are prepared to build four subways and spend the 75% of the provincial share, the least you can do for eastern Ontario is pick up the two thirds of the cost for the completion of Highway 416. If you can comment on that, I would appreciate it.

A big concern that is still out there in other parts of the province is of course the Red Hill Creek Expressway and I would like to hear from you as to what the status is and where you see that going at the present time. I'm sure there's intense interest in that in the Hamilton area and I look forward to your response on that one.

What you haven't again touched in your opening statement is another area, which is the whole field of bicycles and bicycle policy. At one point in the previous estimates you put that forward as quite a significant concern of your ministry. We've heard very little about that aspect of transportation, and I would like to hear what has been the progress and the development since you came forward with your bicycle policy. Where's it at and can somebody bring me up to date?

As part of that as well, where are your plans with regard to the bicycle helmet legislation, since this is supposed to take effect pretty soon and I'd like to hear from you how you're preparing for the proclamation of that.

I see the Chairman nodding at me.

**The Chair:** That doesn't mean I'm falling asleep, Mr Daigeler.

**Mr Daigeler:** Does it mean my time is over?

**The Chair:** Your time is almost completed.

**Mr Daigeler:** Almost over. I think I've put enough of the concerns that I want to raise on the record. If we do adjourn today or tomorrow, perhaps some of your officials can start, with a little bit more leisure, looking at some of these questions and prepare some answers for you when we come back to the more detailed questions and answers.

**Mr Turnbull:** Minister, as I expressed in my question to the Chair at the beginning, I would prefer not to make a long speech. I see the Liberals have decided to spend their half-hour, as is their right, to make a speech, putting on record what they want. I would like to concentrate on questions and I would ask that consideration be given by the committee that, in the respect that I will be taking a very short period of time to put these points on the record, that would actually be acknowledged in terms of the amount of time I will have for questioning the minister.

I will start out by making the comment that I am concerned with the way your ministry is going about the shared shipper responsibility. It is very clear from statements from you and the Liberal Party and myself that we're all in agreement on the urgent need to have shared shipper responsibility legislation through. You had, as you correctly pointed out, an opportunity last fall, but the Liberals objected to it as being part of a large omnibus bill.

1640

The fact is that you've had a year to bring in legislation, and you didn't do it. We're now being asked to give first, second and third reading to Mr Hansen's private member's bill tomorrow to pass this. Given the fact that all parties have agreed that we encourage you to bring this forward, I still have to tell you we have difficulties with the process of doing it that way. I'm putting you on

notice now, so that you will have time for your staff to prepare it, that we would be supportive of a government bill to be brought in tomorrow for first, second and third reading.

To the extent that you have the draft from Mr Hansen as to what he has put forward, I would say that would be the basis of your bringing the bill forward. Under those circumstances, we would support it. There is absolutely no reason you shouldn't do this, if indeed there is the goodwill and it is indeed your intention to pass this legislation. I would ask you to comment on that.

Highway 407, as you well know, is a question of great concern to me. I'm most concerned about the secrecy surrounding the awarding of this contract, and in fact I will be asking you questions about how you went into the procedure with the suggestion that it would be financed by the private sector and then it appears that hours before the decision was made it was decided that the public sector would finance it.

The suggestion has been made that the reason for that—in fact when I got a phone call from one of your assistants immediately after the decision had been made, I was told that it was because you had discovered that it would be cheaper for the government to finance it. I find that kind of comment absolutely incomprehensible. I know that there are sufficient people around who advise your government at least, who have enough knowledge to know that a government can borrow at a cheaper rate than commercial corporations. So I have to believe that there is more to this question, and I will be asking you a lot of detailed questions on the process.

With respect to GO Transit, I have some concerns that your government in opposition constantly assailed the private sector with such expressions as "corporate welfare bums." Now in fact here's your government trotting off to Bermuda to close a deal for tax reasons. The taxpayers of Ontario are paying for officials to go down to Bermuda so that somebody can avoid taxes. Is this truly the same government? I'm not telling you, "Don't do it." I'm simply saying that if at least you have seen the light, be intellectually honest enough to say: "We were wrong in opposition. We were dead wrong. Socialism doesn't work." I'll pass on from that.

I have questions with respect to the Danforth yards, which were contracted by the GO Transit to be purchased from the CNR for the price of \$54 million. I believe that the contract called for best efforts by the government to obtain the environmental approvals for that. It's quite obvious that the government can obtain environmental approvals. When we consider the things that your government has done to subvert the environmental process, we have to say that it's very, very easy for you to get the environmental approvals. I believe that we're in danger of losing the \$54 million and also losing the opportunity to have GO Transit rolling stock stored east of Yonge Street. So I want some questions on that.

I want to speak to you about your government's pressure to build four subway lines when in fact, and I'm not blaming you for this, the previous Liberal government sat on its hands on transit for years and then weeks before the election suddenly rolled out this grandiose



scheme for building megaprojects of the subway.

I would put to you and I would hope that you could answer me and that your officials could answer me as to whether we could not anticipate a day when we would have the political process completely removed from this so that we can make a long-term commitment to our transfer partners that we will indeed build a kilometre, for example, of subway per year for a long-term period. If indeed we have a downturn, as we're now in, we could then say, "Okay, we'll speed up the process and we'll build two kilometres this year."

That's the way we're going to get the private sector working—

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Leach only said one.

**Mr Turnbull:** It's got nothing to do with Mr Leach. This is what I'm saying. I have some questions about photo-radar and I will be questioning you about a report which came out in Calgary which suggested that it has done nothing to reduce speeds, but in fact has been an enormous cash cow.

I have questions, as you already know, you're on notice, with respect to the anti-private sector bias which is shown in the Wally Majesky report. I want to question you on the short rail line policy of your government and indeed, I would like to know what the current status of your plans is for improving roads, specifically the Trans-Canada Highway in the north.

You will recall in the last election, in that famous document, Agenda for People, you suggested you were going to spend \$100 million a year on it, and I would like some answers with respect to that. I would also like to know the status of your negotiations with the federal government. I know the federal government was supposed to come out in February of this year with a report on high-speed rail between Windsor and Quebec. Perhaps you could update us with respect to that. I would also like a succinct update on the Red Hill Creek Expressway.

Having put the issues on the table, I hope the time that I haven't used, because I believe I've used approximately eight minutes, Mr Chairman, that I could have that extra time allocated to me for question and answer with the minister.

**The Chair:** Mr Turnbull, I can only advise you once in this fashion. You can use the balance of your time for your half-hour, and engage in a question and answer period now, but I can't stack your time.

**Mr Turnbull:** Okay, then I'll proceed with it. Minister, with respect to the shared trucker responsibility, do you have any difficulty with the idea of the government bringing in a bill similar to Mr Hansen's tomorrow for first, second and third reading?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Yes, thank you very kindly. Mr Turnbull, we intend to proceed with shared responsibility. The methodology, the process, is what—

**Mr Turnbull:** Let's not worry about the process. I have a question—I see you're desperately looking at your officials here.

**The Chair:** Mr Turnbull, I'm going to—

**Mr Turnbull:** I wanted a question—

**The Chair:** No, Mr Turnbull, please. I am simply going to suggest that now you have engaged the minister in a question and answer, it's incumbent on the two of you to give each other enough time to ask your question and to respond.

**Mr Turnbull:** Okay. Could I have a succinct answer?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** You've asked your question. I'm sure you'll have the decency and courtesy to let me answer in a broadly summarized form.

**Mr Turnbull:** When you get it.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** We intend to proceed by way of Mr Hansen's private member's bill. It was tabled yesterday.

**Mr Turnbull:** Why?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Because it's the intention of the government to address the matter.

**Mr Turnbull:** Why aren't you bringing the legislation forward?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** We would expect your support. We're also competing with other legislation, but we will be back in the fall, so we're trying to expedite it. It was tabled yesterday and it will see the light of day. We intend it and we appreciate your support.

**Mr Turnbull:** Don't you think it's more appropriate that you bring forward government legislation?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** As long as the job gets done, in the final analysis this is the most—

**Mr Turnbull:** No, no, Minister, let's be very, very clear about this. The job of the government, when you're bringing forward legislation, is to subject the government to scrutiny with respect to the bill. If you bring forward a private member's bill, as you are well aware, it is subject to a very limited amount of scrutiny, and I am concerned about the ongoing process and the precedent that we set with this kind of conduct.

1650

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** I won't repeat it again, but we intend to proceed with Mr Hansen's private member's bill, and this will get the job done.

**Mr Turnbull:** Okay. Turning to 407, I have a letter here which is addressed to you, dated May 25, from the Better Roads Coalition. Just reading in part it says:

"The Better Roads Coalition has a major concern with the procedure used for the analysis of the competitive bids....

"First, the public was advised that private financing was a major objective for this work. The question still remains, would there have been more competitive bidding if the engineering and construction industries had been aware that the government was going to do the financing?"

That is question one, which I'd like answered now. Secondly, their question is:

"The Ontario government and the construction industry over many years have established an open public system of tendering that has the confidence and respect of the people of Ontario. In fact, it has been followed by many jurisdictions not only in Canada, but throughout the world. To throw this openness out to safeguard the



competitiveness of the bidders in other business ventures, in our opinion, is not in the public interest. Public contracts are just that, 'public,' and the contractors are aware of this when they enter into this work."

Now, Minister, could you answer those two questions that are posed by the Better Roads Coalition?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** A valid question indeed, and I thank you. We have assembled a team of experts from all sectors within the Ministry of Transportation, because we wish to address the questions in depth, and by way of expertise I will ask Mr George Davies, who is our deputy minister, to answer those two questions.

**Mr Daigeler:** On a point of order, Mr Chairman: I have no objection if the minister chooses to answer some of the questions Mr Turnbull asked as part of his opening 30 minutes, but I do have objections if we now start what is the normal rotation process with responses from staff and so on. It's up to the minister whether he wants to—

**The Chair:** No, it's up to the Chair, Mr Daigeler, and the Chair has—

**Mr Daigeler:** Well, I know. I'm saying—

**The Chair:** Mr I'm sorry, Mr Daigeler.

**Mr Daigeler:** I'm saying that under the rules of this committee we have 30-minute opening statements by the opposition parties, including the minister, and then the minister will use 30 minutes to make some final remarks and then we start with the officials and everybody else.

**The Chair:** Mr Daigeler, the Chair has assigned a 30-minute period to Mr Turnbull. He has determined that that is how he wishes to use it, and it would be up to Mr Turnbull to determine if he wishes the deputy to respond. He has indicated he wishes to hear the response from the deputy, and they will proceed. This is not a matter for debate, Mr Daigeler, and I will now call the deputy who has been suitably introduced for Hansard to respond.

**Mr Daigeler:** I appreciate, Mr Chairman, what you said.

**The Chair:** No, I'm sorry, Mr Daigeler. If you call a point of order, you're in order, but otherwise you're out of order. Please proceed, Deputy.

**Mr George Davies:** Thank you, Mr Chair. There have been two questions raised: one, the nature of the competitive-bidding process and could it have been made more open and, two, the nature of the openness itself. I'll deal with them in that order.

The bids that were produced were produced as a result of an invitation from the Premier in February 1993. We did have three consortia that came forward. Those three consortia constituted probably among them between 80% and 90% of the engineering and construction capacity within the province of Ontario. One of the three bidders we did not qualify. The proposal that had come forward fell outside of the terms of reference.

**Mr Turnbull:** This is the Bechtel bid?

**Mr Davies:** This is a third party. We have signed confidentiality agreements with all of these parties. There is a third party, and I don't think it would be appropriate for me either to comment on the content of that proposal or to even identify who was in the group, and that's by

a request of those particular groups. The provisions to submit bids that provided for a development design-build—in other words, the possibility that the crown would do the financing—was specifically stated in the RFP. It was not only specifically stated; it was also confirmed in an exchange of correspondence with both sets of bidders on two different occasions. Indeed, there were responses back from both bidders in terms of what their bids would be, absent their financing.

There should not have been any particular questions raised about the fairness of the process, since it was explicit and it was understood. The process itself was fully agreed to as a result of negotiations and formal sign-off by all parties involved, including both consortia.

I think the important thing is that what the Better Roads Coalition is raising is the question of whether it would have been merited to go back to the old process, which would be to break up 407 into component parts and hold standard competitive processes associated with each of these, where it was the government that dictated the specifications for each of those components and then there was the standard Ministry of Transportation bidding process.

We felt that would have significantly detracted from the kinds of savings we have been able to obtain as a result of the integration of engineering with the construction companies and the invitation to those companies to exercise innovation in the proposals they came back with.

**Mr Turnbull:** Let me ask you, based upon that, is it not reasonable to suggest that if you wanted to get the maximum number of qualified bidders—under the process you set up the impression was given, I believe to everybody, but certainly to the media and the opposition parties, that it was to be financed by the private sector—is it not reasonable to believe that there would have been other consortia possible that would have had the capability to have done the project without breaking the contract up into pieces, had they not had to have the financial wherewithal to be able to carry it through?

**Mr Davies:** The RFP was a public document and it provided for the crown doing the financing. It also provided for other variations that were left to the discretion of the crown. While there may have been the impression, it was initially our preference that the financing be done by the private sector as part of the overall integrated proposal.

Unfortunately, when we did the analysis, as we worked our way through, having picked the best overall proposal and done the comparative analysis with the financing included, having then reaffirmed the choice of that best overall proposal as a result of that comparison, we came down to the issue of, how do we ensure the best value for the public?

When we did the comparison between the financing proposal that was being offered versus the risk that the government was being asked to take on—which is something we had said we didn't want to do; we had a preference that the risk be assumed fully by the private sector—as soon as that risk came back to us, we had to make a decision. Was the risk we were being expected to take on commensurate with any conceivable benefits

associated with them financing it? The answer was no.

**Mr Turnbull:** Was the risk that you were being asked to take on equal in both of the bids?

**Mr Davies:** It was roughly comparable. There were different variations in it, but it was roughly comparable. But remember, we had gone through, we had made the risk assessment, we had made the choice. Having made the choice, we then dealt with the question of, would it make sense for the private consortium to finance or the public sector? The difference in net present value was between \$65 million and \$130 million: net present value. If one were to do the arithmetic figures, it would be in the realm of several hundred million dollars over the life of the project.

1700

**Mr Turnbull:** You're saying that the winning bid, compared with the other bid, the difference was—

**Mr Davies:** No, I'm saying that for the winning bid, for them to finance it versus the government to finance it, the difference in the net present value—the government was being asked—sorry, it's not necessarily the government. The government was being asked to accept a certain degree, a very high degree, of risk.

Secondly, the users, who are paying for 407 through their tolls, were being asked to pay a significantly higher price in order to pay for the additional costs of the private financing. We calculated that at between \$65 million and \$130 million net present value. That was the difference between public sector versus private sector financing of that winning proposal.

**Mr Turnbull:** Based upon what ridership, or what user volume were you basing that on?

**Mr Davies:** Based on our forecast, which was done by an independent, respected forecaster, one of the three firms in North America that is recognized by financial intermediaries as producing bankable forecasts.

In addition, the impact of that additional cost adds somewhere in the realm of about half a cent per kilometre to the toll that would have to be paid. By raising the toll cost, because of the elasticities, one also has an impact on the ridership, so there would be a somewhat diminished ridership. As it was, we didn't have to factor that in.

**Mr Turnbull:** This decision that was made by deputy ministers was very complicated, on a very important project. The evaluation team must have used some criteria and some weighting in terms of selecting the winning bid. Can you give me some details as to what criteria you used and what weighting you used? For example, I'm specifically speaking to the fact that I know the winning bid is substantially a six-lane highway, most of the way, made of concrete. Was that the same materials and construction for the losing bid?

**Mr Davies:** I'm reluctant to disclose what was in the losing bid because we have signed a confidentiality agreement with the bidder, but let me just make some general comments about differences. There was a difference in the material between the two bids. There was a difference in other features, such as the level of illumination. There was a difference in terms of some of the

features associated with interchanges. There was a difference in terms of shoulder width, gravel versus paved.

As you point out, those differences in material, as well as the difference in the standards, as well as the difference in capacity, all have an impact in terms of the marketability of the highway, the life-cycle costing of the highway. Therefore, in order to do a direct comparison of the bids, we had to do some standardization so that we were comparing apples with apples.

**Mr Turnbull:** So you were using a life-cycle approach to this. There are only two materials that I know of in constructing a road, one is concrete and the other one is asphalt, so presumably we're talking about asphalt. When you're comparing two bids of dissimilar material and you're using a life-cycle approach, can you tell me what sort of assumptions were built in to your life-cycle calculations?

**Mr Davies:** You're asking a very specific technical question. We did use the AASHTO standards.

**Mr Turnbull:** The what standards?

**Mr Davies:** That's the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials.

**The Chair:** The deputy indicates there is someone here who could give a more fulsome response. Would you like that?

**Mr Turnbull:** Let's just stick with this line of questioning for the moment.

You have indicated that in fact this is a very technical type of process, and I would agree with you. Can you tell me what sort of qualifications the deputies who made this had to make this technical decision? Was there anybody who had any road construction experience to be able to base this decision on?

**Mr Davies:** We had several technical teams that were producing analysis and providing the results of that analysis—not the recommendations—to the deputies.

**Mr Turnbull:** And these teams were made up of?

**Mr Davies:** Not only ministry, engineering and economic and financial people, but also we had an independent engineering firm that was part of the advice to the team, and then of course, as you know, we had an overall process consultant and then independent financial advisers.

**Mr Turnbull:** Speaking of your independent financial advisers, is it not correct that these independent financial advisers in fact are people who are actively involved in raising money for the province?

**Mr Davies:** There were several teams of independent financial advisers, some of whom are actively involved in raising money for the province, others of whom are not.

**Mr Turnbull:** Is that not a conflict of interest, suggesting to the government that it's not a good idea for the private sector to finance it, perhaps finance it through the government and then we'll go and finance the money for you at a fee?

**Mr Davies:** We did not ask for recommendations from those people. We asked for their analysis in terms of what the comparative costs would be. One also has to



recognize that there are in the realm of a half a dozen or so key firms that do most of the financing, that arrange for most of the financing for the government, and two of those half-dozen were part of one particular team that was providing this analysis and advice.

**Mr Turnbull:** When did you advise the bidders in fact that you were leaning towards doing the financing yourselves?

**Mr Davies:** The decision was announced—I don't have the specific date—on the day that we made the public announcement. There were specific requests back to both bidders to produce their guaranteed maximum prices for a design-built proposal which would be absent government financing, and there was a clarification process that occurred. Therefore, they were fully aware that was an option that was being considered. There are specific dates in terms of when that interaction occurred, and it did precede by several months the final announcement.

**Mr Turnbull:** I understand that there was a commitment made that the two consortia would do a certain amount of outsourcing after they got the contract. Is that correct?

**Mr Davies:** We did not seek that commitment. We made that an option that they may wish to address in the bids themselves. One of them chose to make a fairly explicit commitment, another one gave a general target.

**Mr Turnbull:** Is that the winning consortium that gave the explicit commitment?

**Mr Davies:** You're asking me to, by omission, disclose details of a bid for which I've signed a confidentiality agreement.

**Mr Turnbull:** Let me say, I'm sure you're aware of the invitation of the Daily Commercial News, from June 16 of this year, to pre-qualify for subcontractors, and I read the last line: "All tenders will be closed." These in fact are people who are going to do the traditional small pieces of roads, but it's going to be by closed tender. Does that not give you any cause for concern?

**Mr Davies:** We have an overall guaranteed maximum price from the winning consortium which cannot be exceeded without severe penalties being paid.

**Mr Turnbull:** As I'm sure you're aware, within the winning consortium, there are several companies that were subs or parents of the winning consortium that could conceivably be brought in under the guise of being subcontractors.

**Mr Davies:** That is the normal way of doing business, even in our conventional contracts.

**Mr Turnbull:** Just one last question. What experience does this winning consortium have of roadbuilding in this province, or in fact in Canada?

**Mr Davies:** The combination of members are highly experienced.

**Mr Turnbull:** Have they built any roads in Ontario?

**Mr Davies:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Minister, you now have up to 30 minutes to provide responses to the questions that have been raised in the opening statements. I should indicate for the

record that both legislative research assigned to this committee and staff of the ministry have been taking down the questions. If a more fulsome response is required, Minister, it's always appreciated to receive those in writing and in a timely fashion through the clerk. Then they will be circulated appropriately. Having said that, Minister, if you'd like to proceed, please do.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** By way of general remarks, I'll certainly attempt to entertain some of these subject matters, some of the issues that were raised. However, again, we have assembled—I hear there is a bell.

**The Chair:** It is a 30-minute bell.

**Mr Duignan:** They want it shorter.

**Mr Turnbull:** Can someone go in and tell them we will not be there until such-and-such a time?

**The Chair:** No. I'm guided by the standing orders here. Please, I appreciate the assistance of the committee members with their suggestions, but if we're called to the House, we must go to the House. It is a 30-minute bell. The clerk advises that the vote will be called early. So this committee must recess for the vote and then reconvene when the vote has been completed.

**Mr Turnbull:** If it is before 6.

**The Chair:** Well, a 30-minute bell, according to my watch, is going to get us—yes?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** We're coming in early, so this meeting stands in recess until the vote has been completed, and then we will return. The Chair would like everyone to return as quickly as possible.

*The committee recessed from 1713 to 1734.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** The standing committee on estimates will resume its deliberations this afternoon. The Minister of Transportation is in the midst of his response to the opposition critic's questions. Minister.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you kindly, Chair. Mr Daigeler, with respect, on the 416, we have a commitment. We take that commitment seriously, the commitment from the minister responsible for the infrastructure program, Mr Eggleton.

You will be aware that we have committed substantial money over the past years to address the need around Highway 416, referring to the northern part. Many would wish to have the process accelerated, meaning 416 south. Well, we acquiesce. However, we can't do it alone. We heard Mr Eggleton commit to one third: simply put, to maybe \$60 million. What is needed is \$180 million. Let's keep in mind that this is a departure from form.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** We don't get a nickel, a penny, from the federal government with those people, Mr Daigeler. You must be aware that at times you say little, but one thing for sure with those people, you always pay.

It has been said that Ontario pays for a lot more than it needs. It was viewed as a rich province. It continues to be so. However, our shoulders aren't as broad as they used to be. So we're counting on your assistance, and we know of your commitment to the people in your riding.



We know that you're fully cognizant of the importance of having the 416, for its obvious needs around the national capital, and that you will help us get the cheque from your federal counterpart.

**Mr Jim Wiseman (Durham West):** It's in the mail, right?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Yes. In this club of ladies and gentlemen, surely the words of Liberals are a sacred trust. I know that this can be taken very seriously. We'll look forward to your support on the 416 and look forward to a \$60-million cheque so we can put some women and men to work and address the need at the same time.

On the subject matter of what has become, let's say, controversial photo-radar, I can't help but notice that throughout the debate on photo-radar, everyone has been consistent. The government always talked about safety. The government always referred to the human dimension: lives. The opposition was equally consistent, for they always talked about money and about a tax grab. I guess that's the basic difference—well, it's a matter of philosophy. We have an obligation; we're seizing the obligation.

Our situation is improving, but we of course don't have an immaculate record. You saw them on the 401 surely, going back and forth to Ottawa, where 130 kilometres at times won't keep you in the left lane. They don't pass you, they zoom by, and at 150 or 160. I don't wish to catastrophize, Mr Daigeler, but at those excessive speeds, if you make a mistake you go straight from the highway to the bag. You're dead, dead, dead. We're introducing photo-radar for those who exceed or surpass normalcy. It's an obligation and we're going with it. It's part of our safety program.

The construction of the 407: I wish to thank all those not only during the initial remarks, but with the expertise of Mr Davies, and we have members of our first brigade here. They represent the very best, not only in engineering but in all forms of expertise related to transportation. We had to be imaginative, innovative. We can no longer afford to do things the way things were done traditionally. It doesn't work any more.

1740

There are better ways. We involve entrepreneurs at the infrastructure level and we form the corporation to give us the flexibility to allow us to expedite the 20,000 jobs that are created now, building 69 kilometres of a super-highway parallel to the 401, which is now the busiest highway in North America—69 kilometres in a relatively short time, four and a half years. It's equivalent to 20,000 jobs.

The government did the borrowing. Well, it did because of anywhere from 50 to 75 basis points difference. We have the ability to borrow which far exceeds—and it's true of all governments—the ability of others to be competitive.

**Mr Turnbull:** Does this come as a surprise to you?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** It shouldn't come as a surprise. However, opportunities were given to Liberals and Conservatives. NDPers don't have a monopoly or shouldn't profess to have a monopoly on the intricacies

of the market. It belongs to everyone. We've had many, many years since Confederation.

In fact, history will attest that the Conservative Party of Ontario served for 42 consecutive years, with ample opportunity to go to this method of financing, but I guess times were different then. Oh, it seems so long, Mr Chairman.

**Mr Wiseman:** We are getting \$4 billion more revenue.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Yes, yes, yes. Then the Liberals were given an opportunity to do it. Well, we're proud we did it. It's there right at the marketplace and it's going to relieve traffic.

Since we were able to borrow at a cheaper cost, when you give the loonie for your county you won't have to give as much, so everybody wins here. It won't cost you as much per kilometre because your borrowing costs are less. It makes good sense to us. Is there anything we don't understand?

**Mr Turnbull:** Yes, I don't understand. Did you factor in the cost of a potential downgrade in the—

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Turnbull, the minister is still talking.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Mr Turnbull, I see nothing provocative in my remarks. Will you please—thank you very much, Mr Chairman, for reminding one of our colleagues that there will be ample time during the process to respond.

Let me talk about mergers. We talk about the contributions, about the roles of CN and CP. What is the future of the railroad in the province of Ontario?

Our government is very concerned about public necessity and convenience. Our government also questions the process. I know that in our special part of Ontario, in the great and vast and magnificent northwest, both CN and CP take on an extraordinary proportion. For us it's a way of life. It gives us a chance to be like the others in other special parts of Ontario. We feel that we're urbanites. We're not as remote. We have access to goods and services by way of railroads. It levels the playing field. It's our vital link, and we know of responsibilities.

Mr Daigeler, Jean Chrétien is the CEO. He's the chairman of Canadian National; let's make no mistake. Doug Young has delegated authority. Our government doesn't wish to see the federal Liberals tear up the tracks, tear out the heart of the community, so we will avail ourselves of the opportunity to represent the heart and soul, the way of life of northern communities.

We will oppose, not only with all the sincerity at our command but with all our strength. Where it makes no sense, in our humble opinion, we will recognize that things change, but where it makes sense, in our humble opinion, we'll go to the wall, for we are resource-based, we are dependent and we must be given a chance to integrate economically.

On the subject matter of GO Transit, I think an exotic place—what is it, the Bahamas or Bermuda? I don't know. Being a person of moderate means, I can only read about those places. I wish it would have been said with

tongue in cheek. Leaseback is an innovative way of doing business.

**Mr Turnbull:** Excuse me, Minister. For clarification, you said it was a leaseback—

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Turnbull, the minister has the floor. You'll have opportunities later to ask questions.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** We'll go into details. I'm just giving the guidelines. If I make a mistake in terms of interpretation, you will—I make the same mistake in three languages, so you will forgive me, please, with respect. Mr Turnbull, there's no shell game here, there are no new tricks, there is no cooking the books. Everything is transparent. It's the way to finance.

**Mr Turnbull:** So why did you close in Bermuda?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Because we've long learned how to spell Liechtenstein, and in this case it's spelled Bermuda.

**Mr Turnbull:** So it was a tax dodge.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Not a tax dodge; it's a tax haven.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Turnbull, I can't tolerate your repeated questions. The minister has the floor.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you very kindly. I appreciate the contribution of Mr Turnbull. We're colleagues and we're friends. Mind you, I'm the one saying this, David. You know, I can appreciate—we're going to do it together in the remaining time. These are members of our first brigade; well, it's like the seventh fleet here. They're all experts in their own field.

We have people here, Mr Daigeler, Mr Turnbull, my distinguished colleagues, who can spend years and years informing us about the fascinating world of axle weight, slack adjuster, hydraulic brake, and if we miss out on those informative sessions, we have failed to grab yet another opportunity of lifelong learning.

**Mr Turnbull:** Gilles, would you get on with answering questions?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** It's my half-hour. I'm always talking about transportation. I'm committed to this; I'm dedicated.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** No, no. I find everything about transportation passionate. I'm going to ask Mr Vervoort, who's—

**Mr Wiseman:** If you don't think those axle weights are important, go take a look at the highway.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** That's right, of primary importance.

Carl, can you tell us, can you share your expertise? Will you please privilege us with your expertise as to what is the building season—we have more than 400 contracts out there—in a broadly summarized form.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Vervoort, could you come forward to the microphone and identify yourself for the purposes of Hansard.

**Mr Carl Vervoort:** My name is Carl Vervoort, and I'm the assistant deputy minister of operations. I understand the question is the extent of, duration of the construction season?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Yes, please, for the benefit of all of us.

**Mr Vervoort:** Typically construction season starts in earnest in March and, depending on the nature of activities, can extend into November. Some operations can in fact be year-round.

**Mr Pouliot:** Can I just get some clarification? Who asked this?

**The Vice-Chair:** The minister has the time, and he is asking.

**1750**

**Mr Turnbull:** Okay, but the minister is supposed to be answering our questions. That's the idea of estimates.

**The Vice-Chair:** Is this a point of order?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** You have an opportunity to watch a master work in his craft. This is not a carnival, please.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Vervoort, could you continue?

**Mr Vervoort:** Depending on the nature of the construction activity, it can in fact stretch throughout the course of the year. I would say, generally speaking, activities associated with construction are temperature-dependent, and in Ontario, particularly northern Ontario, that means a shorter season.

**Mr Turnbull:** And what's the cost of rice pudding? It's about as useful to this conversation.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Turnbull, it's the minister's time.

**Mr Turnbull:** Well, I'm sorry; it is the opposition's time. Estimates are for the opposition parties to be able to—

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Turnbull, the time is for the minister to respond to the opposition critics' questions.

**Mr Turnbull:** Yes, but he's not responding to the questions like this.

**The Vice-Chair:** He has requested the advice and the contribution of Mr Vervoort. Mr Vervoort, could you continue?

**Mr Vervoort:** The season, therefore, starts really in earnest in southern Ontario throughout March and typically ends with November 15, that being the date, a criterion we use for asphalt paving because the temperature drops. Typically that would be the emphasis of the season.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you kindly. There was a question from Mr Daigeler, a colleague, about northern—

**Mr Turnbull:** I asked you about the construction.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Oh, pardon me. I'm sorry, yes, about the northern commitment. In the political sense I think it was—

**Mr Daigeler:** The Agenda for People.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Oh, yes, the Agenda for People. Yes, I recall very vividly. I recall the document, and I think we are exceeding or surpassing our commitment. But there again that's us—

**Mr Turnbull:** You have \$100 million a year?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Yes, our northern highway component is in excess. You have to look at transfer payments as well. We have a supplementary, we have transfer payments, so we're exceeding our commitment. But there again, that's us; the need has to be met.



**Mr Turnbull:** On the Trans-Canada Highway you're exceeding your \$100 million a year. That was the example you gave. Am I not correct in thinking that your document, *An Agenda for People*, called for \$100 million a year on the Trans-Canada Highway?

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Carl, do you want to take us through, for the edification of my distinguished colleague, what we are doing on the Trans-Canada Highway?

**Mr Turnbull:** How much are you spending?

**Mr Vervoort:** I don't have a tabulation of all of the investments on the Trans-Canada Highway. That network consists of, as you may appreciate, Highway 11, Highway 17 across the north, Highway 69, which is primarily a north-south connection, Highway 11 also, the extent that it goes all the way south to Metropolitan Toronto, plus Highway 17, from the Quebec border right through across Ontario.

**Mr Turnbull:** I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the northern component.

**Mr Vervoort:** The northern Ontario provincial highways component is the estimates of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. That estimate for capital construction is in the order of \$124 million. That, I believe, is comparable to estimates for investments on northern highways compared to the previous year.

**Mr Turnbull:** Good. Thank you.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** I welcome the question, and I think the response will satisfy the needs, our commitment to all parts of Ontario. It hasn't been easy. We've had difficult times: the recession, and then you're competing for capital dollars. But we keep securing fully 50% of capital allocation, building things from the budget in Ontario.

The Premier and the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance, in their wisdom, have recognized the multiplier, the two and a half dollars for every dollar that you spend that is returned to the taxpayers. You're getting \$2.50, and that's action directe, and you're building an infrastructure that renders you more competitive.

Of course, I repeat, our flagship is the 407. If Jim Jones, truck driver, can make one more trip, he'll have more money in his pocket to address his priorities, his needs, and if he works for you, you'll have more money in your pocket as well.

**Mr Turnbull:** Excuse me, Minister, what question are you answering?

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Turnbull, I'm afraid I cannot—

**Mr Turnbull:** I'm just wondering which question the minister's answering.

**The Vice-Chair:** No.

**Mr Daigeler:** Mr Chairman, I really hope you'll enforce your ruling.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** I'm talking about the 407. There have been questions raised vis-à-vis the 407. Will you please bear with me? It's my time and I have a pot-pourri and have identified several items of crucial importance at Transportation. But I can understand, for most of them are very good news. I can understand the reaction.

It's the real story, it's the real world of Transportation Ontario which we are sharing with you, sir, so that we are all better informed and can spread the gospel, the message of the contribution of the government and Transportation Ontario. This is what we're here to do. It's reflected on your estimates.

This is not a vehicle, a forum for political bias, for the needs of Ontarians are far more important than political stripes. This is why I was attempting, without prejudice, to stick to the philosophy of estimates, to its true meanings, so that every tax dollar is accountable and value for money becomes the order of the day, for the money is well spent indeed.

Those are not wasted words. They're not out of context or out of order. They're directly relevant to the job that we do on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario. They're reflected in the estimates. They're reflected out there in the real world, once we get away from the cocoon.

We could talk about the contribution of GO Transit: reasonable, affordable, reliable, 98% on-time delivery, a system hors pair, bar none. Everyone wants to be on track. We're meeting the people at their doorstep. We're establishing equilibrium, balance, and we do it very well. We do it well because we're responding to the needs of the people, the tax dollars coming back to your community, transfer payments, 882 communities, the same money as was spent last year. That's not easy. Recession has hit big time. No one has been immune. Everyone has been impacted.

Supplementary: The same money as was spent last year. Spending more money on highways than ever before. We're punching four subway lines. We're attempting to do that, the first time that any shovel-in-the-ground work has been done in over 10 years. We want to have balance, use public transit, and yet we respect the convenience of a car on highways.

We're moving on all fronts and we're doing it with Ontario's tax dollars, and people are saying yes, they're saying uh-huh, and it gives them a chance. You see, some of the people haven't brought a paycheque home for some time. It has been pretty hard. Now I saw them going to the cinema last week. They were smiling. You know, they tell me: "Maybe not next year but the year after, maybe I'll go to Florida. I'm back, I've got a job here, I believe."

It's a boulevard of success, and each and every one of our foot soldiers—those are the people you see here—go beyond in terms of providing. We cheer one another up. This is a good-news ministry. We cut the ribbon, it's palpable, and yet it's related to people.

**Mr Turnbull:** Gilles, it's drivel.

**Hon Mr Pouliot:** Thank you very kindly.

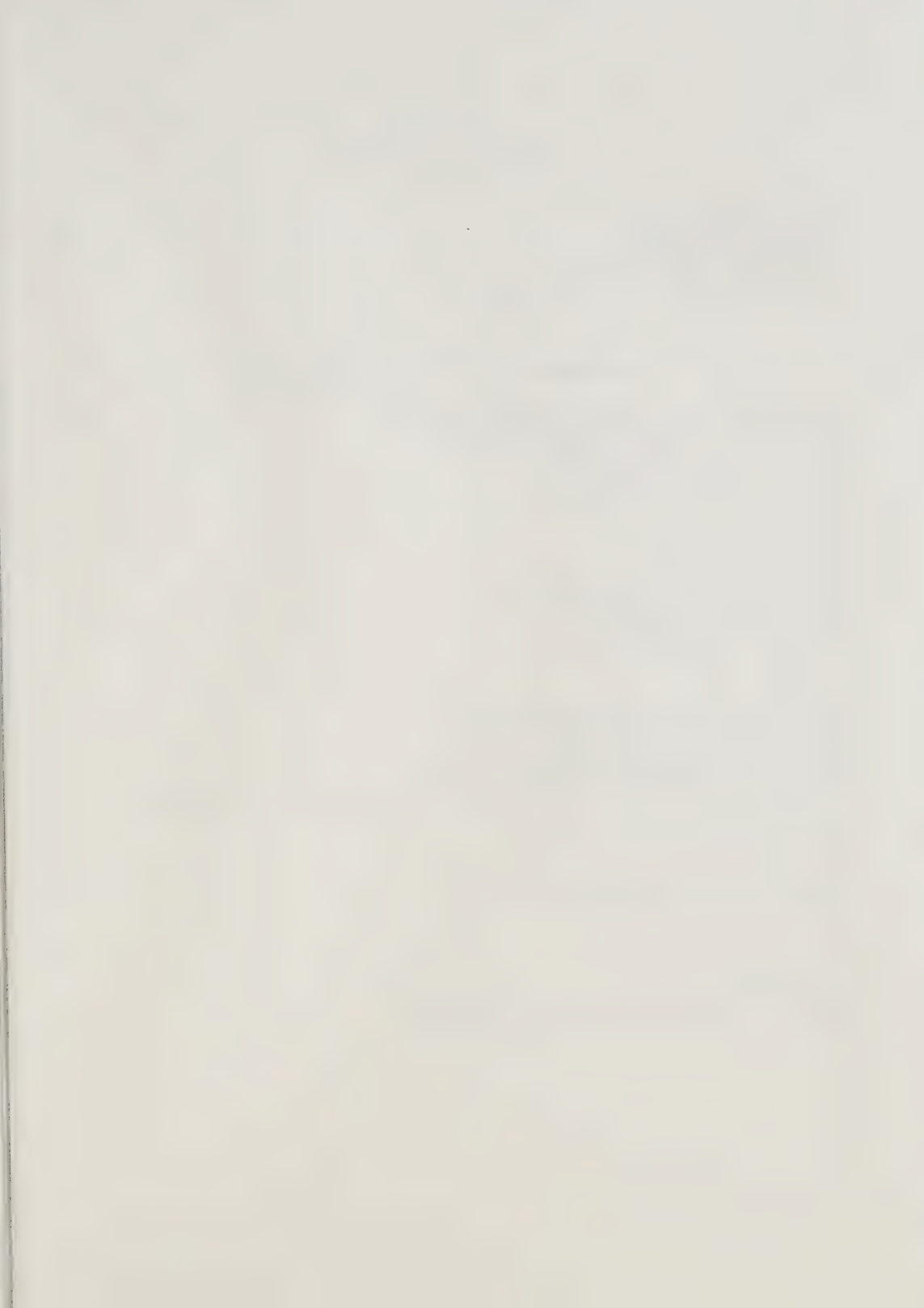
**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Minister. It is 6 o'clock and we will meet again at the call of the Chair.

I thank the officials from the Ministry of Transportation and thank the minister for his participation, as well as the opposition critics. The meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1759.







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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**\*Chair / Président:** Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South/-Sud PC)

**\*Vice-Chair / Vice-Président:** Arnott, Ted (Wellington PC)

Abel, Donald (Wentworth North/-Nord ND)

Carr, Gary (Oakville South/-Sud PC)

**\*Duignan, Noel** (Halton North/-Nord ND)

Elston, Murray J. (Bruce L)

Fletcher, Derek (Guelph ND)

Hayes, Pat (Essex-Kent ND)

**\*Lessard, Wayne** (Windsor-Walkerville ND)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West/-Ouest L)

Ramsay, David (Timiskaming L)

Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

*\*In attendance / présents*

### **Substitutions present/ Membres remplaçants présents:**

Dadamo, George (Windsor-Sandwich ND) for Mr Fletcher

Daigeler, Hans (Nepean L) for Mr Mahoney

Frankford, Robert (Scarborough East/-Est ND) for Mr Wiseman

Johnson, Paul R. (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings/ Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud ND)  
for Mr Hayes

Turnbull, David (York Mills PC) for Mr Carr

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes:**

Wiseman, Jim (Durham West/-Ouest ND)

**Clerk / Greffière:** Grannum, Tonia

### **Staff / Personnel:**

McLellan, Ray, research officer, Legislative Research Service

Richmond, Jerry, research officer, Legislative Research Service







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